

WEIGHTY REASONS

For Tender

Conscientious Protestants

To be in

UNION and COMMUNION

With the



Church of England,

And their Fellow-Christians.

(And not now to forsake the Publick Assemblies thereof:) As the only means to prevent the Growth of Popery, and established a Lasting Security of the Peace of the Kingdom.

In several Sermons Preached upon

I Cor. i. 10. *That ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you, but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.*
And also on

Heb. 10. 25. *Not forsaking the Assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is.*

By a dutiful Son of the Church of England.

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WEIGHTY REASONS

for Tenders

Outline of Toleration

To be in

Union and Concord

With the

Church of England

And their Fellow Christians

And now to forgive the English Vicars
(which) Are the only means to heaven.
Crownhill Postern say especially I will
quit all trace of the Papists.

In every Scourge Preacher doth

Col 1. 10. That is the love which filleth us
because we inherit heaven by our trust in the
holy doctrine in the name of Jesus Christ
And still do.

Hch 10: 32. You faithfully do the bidding of our Lord
teaching us the way to heaven.

By a divine word of the Church of England

O V D O V. I charge you O reader to observe
that if any Clergyman or other person
print printing book or paper

THE
OBLIGATION
OF CONSCIENCE
TO UNION
AND COMMUNION
WITH FELLOW-CHRISTIANS.

1 Corinith. 1, & 10. part of it.

That ye all speak the same thing, and that
there be no divisions amongst you: but that
ye be perfectly joyned together in the same
mind, and in the same judgement.

IT is a sound and useful observation,
that Mr. Baxter makes in his *Cure of
Church-Divisions*. There is in many
Christians (alas!) a strange partiality in
their apprehensions of good and evil.
Some Duties they dare not omit, and
they judge all ungodly that omit them:

B whilst

2. *The Obligation of Conscience to Union*

whilst some other duties, as great as they, are past by and neglected, as if they were no part of Religion : and on the contrary some sins they fear with very great tenderness, when their Teachers can scarce make their Consciences take any notice of others, as great and damnable. The Papist seems so sensible of the good of unity, and the evil of divisions, that he thinks even Tyranny and horrid bloodshed, and an usurpation of an universal Monarchy in the Church, to be not onely lawful, but also necessary for the ~~sure~~ ^{and} prevention : in the mean time to make him as sensible of the sinfulness of these unlawful means, and the necessity of a serious, spiritual righteousness, and Christian love and meekness, and forbearance, is a very difficult, almost impossible thing. On the other side, many that are really desirous to be serious and spiritual in Religion, abhorring all hypocritical formality therin, or any usurpation of the Prerogative of Christ, or any persecuting pride or cruelty, are yet strangely senseless ; and careless of the good of unity, and the mischiefs of divisions in the Church. Its sad that sacred fire of zeal should be so unequally acted, and dis-

distributed, all let out upon some Duties, and against some sins, which others as necessary are as strangely overlookt. It brings to mind that cutting reprobation of the Phatisees by our Saviour, (3rd. Looking-glaſs for many Zealots in our Age, so partial in God's Law) (a) *Woe* ^{to} *you Phatisees* (saith Christ) for ye
will be blnt, and kno, and all manner of
Herbs, and pass over judgement, and the
love of God. These ought you to have done,
and not to leave the other undone. Well if
men will submit to the word of God, the
anidore against this strange partiality,
in the matter instances, of Christian uni-
on and concord, is easily provided; there
being almost innumerable rules and pre-
cepts in the Scriptures to convince us of
it. Amongst which this Text is as full as
any. Now I beseech you Brethren, by the
Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all
speak the same thing, and that there be no
divisions amongst you, but that ye be per-
fectly joined together in the same mind, and
in the same judgement.

Thus st. Paul wrote with his Brother
Sosthenes to the Church of God, which
was at Corintb, nor wrote he so to them
only: but (b) with them to all that in
every

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every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, both theirs and ours : The words then are spoken to us also, and all Believers in all places to the Worlds end. Now the Apostle intending to condemn many vices in these Corinthians, that he might not seem to do it out of malice, or spleen, or envy, he begins first with a true commendation of their gifts and vertues, that they were enriched in all knowldg, and in all utterance, that they came behind others in no gift (c). But alas, as knowledge is apt to puffe us up, so these Corinthians began in their pride to divide themselves from each other : So that (d) one cryed, I am for Paul, another I am for Apollo, and a third I am for Cephas; therefore to make way for a sharp reproof hereof, the Apostle brings in this grave observation in the text. Now, I beseech you (saith he) though I might be bold in Christ to enjoyn and command, yet for love sake I rather beseech you. I beseech you, Brethren, I do it in the bowels and affections of a brother : Nay, and by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that is, by the power and authority of Christ, and for the honour and glory of Christ. I Paul so speak as if Christ himself did speak unto you. (For, alas, how

how the name of God, and how the Doctrine of Christ is blasphemed through your divisions; he that runs may read it) and therefore for his sake I beseech you. By the Name of our Lord, that is by virtue of that commission and authority, I have received from him, who is our Lord, and if he be our Lord, where is his honour: and in the Name of our Lord Jesus, he who is your Saviour, and as you hope for Salvation by him; Our Lord Jesus Christ, he that is the anoynted of God, anoynted to be our Prophet, Priest and King; every word in the obtestation hath a sufficient weight to awaken us to attend it. What even this exhortation, I beseech you, Brethren, by that Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions amongst you, but that ye perfectly be soyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgement. It is a strange kind of earnestness, and importunity the Apostle useth, as elsewhere, so here, in this matter. He was deeply sensible of the evil of divisions, how they prejudice Gods truth; for whilst they that profess it, cannot agree in it, the Fool is ready to scoff at it, and to say in heart there is no God; and how they endanger the Church

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and weaken it; no engine, that Satan and Anti-christ can use, more than this, the cutting of it into shreds, like the Levites Concubine; the blowing of the Coals of contention in it; yea, how they endanger the souls of men, by separating them from the Church, and so from Christ, who is the head thereof. The Apostle was deeply sensible of the evil of divisions, and therefore is strangely, and more than ordinarily importunate in this Exhortation, ushering it in, with manifold obtestations.

See Phil. 2. 1, 2, If there be any consolation in affliction, if any comfort in love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any compassion and mercy, fulfil my joy, that you be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Ephes. 4. 1, I the Prisoner of the Lord beseech you that you walk worthy of that vocation wherewith you are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Rom. 16. 17, 18, Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them that cause divisions among you, and avoid them, for they serve not our Lord Jesus; But to name no more, this in the Text is full enough, Now I beseech you Brethren, by the

the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, &c. that there be no divisions among you.

Which words being apparently an exhortation, must be handled in such method, as best agrees with the nature thereof. so that above mentioned may be done.

Now I must explain and proponnd it.

and I must enforce and urge it by explication.

I shall lay open the nature and extent of the (*objectionis quod*) or duty to

which we are exhorted. And then for the enforcing of it, I shall presy sundry pow-

erful motives upon your Conscience, to

engage you to endeavour to practise it,

and lay down wholesome rules and direc-

tions, for the better performing it, if the

Lord enable me, the time permit, and your

christian patience give encouragement.

To proponnd the Exhortation, I

need not at all insist upon the words; they

are so plain and intelligible in themselves,

that being read, they may as easily be un-

derstood; and to offer to give any sense

of them particularly, one by one, might

render them more dark and obscure. Let

it suffice to tell you, that the matter of

duty in them contained is the unity of the

Church, and the concord of Christians.

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An universal accord amongst them is to be endeavoured; so far as is possible in judgement, affection and action, this is the sum, and substance of the Text.

i. The Exhortation is to an unity in judgement; so the Apostle expressly prescribes it, in the latter words, *that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and the same judgement.* It is a thing much to be desired, and by all good means to be endeavoured, that (according to our Churches prayer) God would give to all Nations, Unity, Peace, and Concord, but especially that all, that do profess his holy Name, may also agree in the truth of his holy Word, at least, in the main and most substantial truths thereof, and so that they may be perfectly joyned together in the same mind, and in the same judgement. But if this cannot be hoped for and attained in this life; yet,

ii. That we must be sure of to endeavour to preserve an unanimity in heart and affection. Desired it must be, but hoped for it cannot be, that in the Church of God there should be no noise of Axes and Hammers, no difference in judgements and conceits. (c) There must be Heresies, saith the Apostle, that they that are approved

may be made manifest. There must be Heresies, even as we use to say, that that will be must be ; his meaning is, there will be Heresies, there is no help for it, the wit of men cannot help it.

The understandings of men are not all of one size and temper, God hath distributed his gifts unto men severally as he pleaseth, and even they that transcend in the same gifts, and have the largelt and clearest understandings, yet *they know but in part,* and see through a glass darkly and imperfectly, and so are subject to divers errors and misapprehensions. To which narrowness of our faculties, add the consideration of the corruptions that is in our natures, and disposition ; by reason of that pride that naturally aboundeth in us, being self-willed and turbulent; for the heart of Man is a fowre piece of clay, wondrous stubborn and churlish, so that the best man is not able to take down his own pride sufficiently : there is more ado with this one Viper, than with all our other corruptions besides ; and all those wars and fightings without us, what are they but the scum of this pot that boyles within us, the ebullitions of our lusts that war in our members(f). While there is then cor-
ruptions

6101 Jam. 4.1.

ruptions in our natures; narrowness in our faculties; sleepiness in our eyes, difficulty in our profession, cunning in our enemies, ~~cruel~~ hard things in the Scriptures, and an envious man to super-insemantic, there will still be ~~various~~ ~~opinions~~ men that will be differently minded. No instrument was ever so perfectly in tune, in which the next hand that touched it did not amend something, nor is there any judgement so strong and perspicuous, from which another will not in something find

^g Ireneus with Victor Enseb. Hist.
lib. 5. cap. 26. 9. Epiphanius with
Stephen (L. Trigall.) In Jerome
with S: Augustine (Aug. Ep. 8. 19.)
Basil with Damasus (Basil Ep. 10.
and 77. Baron. Annot. 372. 13. 23.)
Chrysost. with Epiphanius. Solomon
l. 8. c 14, 15.) Cyril with Theo-
doret (Cyril lib. ad epiphanum incip.
to Hist. lib. 14. cap. 55.) quoted
by Dr Reynolds upon Rom. 4. 19.

ground of variance. In the History of the Ancient Churches we find the greatest lights in their several Ages at variance amongst themselves (g). All our comfort then is that the time will come, (but we must not look for it while the World lasteth) when the Son of Man will cause to be gathered out of his Kingdome ~~all~~ all things that offend, or that minister occasion of stumbling or contention, Mat. 13. 41. but in the mean time ~~finite~~ crescere, let both grow together unto the harvest, must have place, ver. 30. in this hard necessity therefore

fore, seeing for the present it cannot be hoped for, there should be such a consonancy and unity of judgement amongst all men; no, not among wise and godly men; but that in many things, and those sometimes of great importance, they may and must dissent one from another unto the worlds end, I say, in this hard necessity, that the first evil cannot be avoided, our wisedome must be to prefer the second, that where there is not perfection, yet there may be peace; good heed must be taken, least by the cunning of Satan, (who is very forward and expert to work upon such advantages) dissention of judgments break not out into dissentions of hearts: lest by different opinions our affections be estranged, and at last quite alienated one from another. It is one thing to dissent from, another thing to be at discord with our brethren. It should be the great care of Christians, instead of desiring to find occasions of cavils to separate from their brethren, saying *I am holier than thou*, by all means, to preserve as much as in them lies, in their several places and stations, the unity of Faith and Love, by which onely we are known to be Christs Disciples. You see the Disciples

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disciples of Christ, when they were waiting for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, according to the promise of Christ, they were ~~disobedient~~ with one accord in

Acts 2.1. one place. (h) And as if they were one

1 Cor. 4.32. man, they were of one heart. (i) The union and accord of heart amongst Christians, is the best disposition that can be

to prepare them, to receive the Spirit of Christ ; yea, and is the best token and sign that they have received it. Indeed this is the new Commandment the fulfilling of the Royal Law. It is Christ's Commandment, this is my Commandment, *that you love one another*: not but that the rest are his Commandments too, but this is peculiarly declared by his mouth, written in his blood, *Walk in love as Christ*

Eph. 5.2. *bath loved you* (k). But this love cannot consist with those divisions and separations which some men make from their brethren, not so much out of love to truth, as out of hatred and contempt of their persons. That's the second thing to which the Apostle exhorts in the Text, in this speaking *the same things, and being of the same mind and judgement, and that there be no divisions amongst us*: It requires in case of different judgments, unanimity in heart and affections.

3. There

There is a third thing in the Exhortation, even uniformity in actions, this seems to be properly in the very letter of the Text, *that you all speak the same things*, for that we may do so, three things seem essentially necessary thereunto.

That you all submit to the same Government. For there is a necessity of Government to prevent confusion : of one Government both in Church and State to prevent division. Where there is an Anarchy or no Government, confusion must needs follow among the members. As it was in *Israel*, *When there was no King in Israel every man did that which was right in his own eyes* (¹); and where there are in one body diverse Governments, division must needs follow among the members, as it was in *Israel*, when *Jeroboam set up a faction against the House of David* ^{*}, *for the transgressions*, and consequently for the punishments thereof, *many are the Princes* thereof (ⁿ). Indeed we in this Nation need not be told the miseries of no Government, or of many Governments, or many Governors, our own experience will sure, for one Age make us dread it, and inexcusable fools, if we desire it. We have all the reason then in the World to obey the Apostles precepts

¹ Judg. 17.

^{*} 1 Kin. 12.

ⁿ Pro. 28, 2.

cepts of submitting to them, that of right are set over us: and being subject to every Ordinance of Man, for our own as well as for the Lord's sake (o). And whoever speaks otherwise, inciting men to cast off this yoke from their necks: they are properly stiled children of *Belial*, their hellish design is clean contrary to the Text, to cause divisions and offences amongst you.

As it is necessary to prevent divisions that you submit to the same Government so that you walk by the same rule; What is that? It is either Principal or Subordination. Principal, even the Law and the Testimony, the sacred Scriptures: Subordinate, even according to the Scriptures, the rules, and canons, and Customes of the Church, without a due respect to both these rules in their right places, it is impossible Christians should speak all the same things, but there will be divisions among them. I dare assert, and think it not difficult to maintain by the Scriptures, as well as clear reason, that there is an obligation upon the members of that Church in which they were born, baptised and bred up, to submit unto, and obey the rules, and canons, and customes thereof,

thereof, if they be not able to prove them contrary to the Scriptures, or the clear light of natural reason in us, or at least such conclusions as are properly, directly, and evidently deduced from them. There is much in that argument of the Apostles to confirm the sober-minded herein. (p) If

any man be contentious, we have no such custome, neither the Churches of God: And in that of our Saviour: If the Offender will not hear the Church, let him be to thee as an Heathen and a Publican: and again, He that heareth you, heareth me, and he that despiseth you, despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me. Do not think I ascribe to the Church any Popish infallibility, or call for any blind obedience unto it. O no; if any of its rules or injunctions, appears to be contrary to the Word of God, like Nebuchadnezzar's to the three Children, to fall down to his image; or Darius his to Daniel, not to pray to any other God; or the High-Priests to the Apostles, not to speak in the name of Jesus, then must we answer with them, whether must we obey God or man, judge ye. But then we must not deny our obedience to such Church rules and canons, as repugnant to God's Word upon light sumisses:

and

and slender presumptions; this were to
q Jude 10. speak evil of the things we know not (q).
r As I take Ond; (*#*) as in the Courts of Civil Justice,
 it, this is men are not ordinarily put to prove them-
 selves honest men, but the proof lieth on
 their accusers part, and therefore it is suf-
 ficient for the acquitting any man. *in fact*
in one of his Sermons. *No worse* *extreme*, that there is nothing of moment
 proved against him; it being requisite to
 the condemning a man that there be a clear
 and a full evidence against him. So in these
 mortal trials, when enquiry is made into
 the lawfulness or sinfulness of our Chur-
 ches rules and customes, and our Gover-
 nours commands, it is sufficient to warrant
 them, if there can be nothing produced
 from express Scriptures or sound reason
 against them; and to condemn or disobey
 them upon remote consequences and weak
 deductions, though it be from Scripture-
 Texts, can ne'r be excused of rashness
 and unrighteousness. Sure obedience is an
 unquestioned duty, *obey them that have the
 rule over you* (saith the Apostle) for they
 watch for your souls, and therefore unless
 it be manifest, that their Lawes and
 injunctions be against the Word of God,
 all our questions are but carpings, and
 needless stumbling blocks, laid in our way
 by

by the Troublers of *Israel*. The safest way is obedience, which also is absolutely necessary among Christians, that they may speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among them. Then,

3. More particularly still to this end, that as Christians Brethren ye may speak the same things without divisions, it is necessary that ye all joyn in the same form of prayer, praise, and manner of worshipping God. It was David's earnest desire, ^{to} magnifie the Lord with me, and let us exalt his Name together. And the Holy Ghost in the *Act*s mentions this Uniformity in the Churches Infancy, and time of her first love, to be one chief cause of its prospering and enlarging, *Act*s 4. 24. The multitude of Believers lifted up their voice in praises with one accord. The people with one accord gave heed to the things that Phillip spoke. And its a great part of the Blessedness of the heavenly Jerusalem, that the Elders sing with one voice unto the Lord. So doth the Apostle make it his earnest prayer for the *Romans*, that they might be like minded one towards another; that with one mind, and with one voice, they might glorie God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: with Rom. 15. 6.

one mind, and with one mouth too; while men think to glorifie God in several ways, and several forms, it is scarce intelligible, how they can do it in this desirable manner, with one mind, and with one mouth; so many several ways, so many several mouths; and that can never tend to the glory of God. The Apostles expression intimates, that like-mindedness, unanimity, and uniformity, are very subservient to the glory of God: What an honour is it to the God of Israel, when all Israel came in as one man to do him worship; when that admirable variety of Gifts and Administrations and Offices that are in his Church do not jar and clash one against another, but sustain and mutually supply out of their stores the wants each of other, and all conspire together in their several kinds to glorifie God: What else is musical harmony but concord in discoursed variety in consort? it makes the musick full and delightful; when there is a well-ordered variety of voices and instruments in it; but if all instruments were perfectly well tuned, yet if the men could not agree what to play, but one would have a nimble Galliard, another a frisking Jig, another a grave Air;

Air ; and if all of them should be so wilful , as without yielding to the rest , to scrape on his Tune as loud as he could , what a hideous hateful noise may you imagine would such a mes of Musick be ? no less odious to God , and equally grievous to every godly man it is , when such Vices as these are heard in the Church of God , *I am of Paul , and I of Cephas , and I of Apollo :* When one Pamphleteer will have the Church governed after this fashion , another after that ; when one Mountebank in Religion will have this way of Worship , and form of Prayer , another that , to the great scandal of the Reformed Religion , and the manifest dishonour of God . Surely beloved , such an Uniformity , as of all Christian Members of the same Church to be of one mind , and worship God in one place , and in one way , and form , and manner , with one accord , would be the most beautiful , and comely , and happiest thing in the world . So is this Uniformity in actions of Worship also necessarily included in this Apostolical Exhortation , to speak the same things , and that there be no divisions amongst us .

Indeed this would be a perfect and bles-

C 2 sed

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sed Unity for all these three to meet together ; unity in judgment , unanimity of loving affection , and uniformity in action ; and this perfection ought to be both in all our aims and endeavours : but if while we faithfully endeavour it in our several places , we cannot (through our own weakness , or others waywardness) attain to the full perfection hereof , yet *pulchrum erit in secundis tertiiis ve* , it will be our comfort and commendation to labour and attain so much after it as possibly we can ; and therefore *nevertheless whereunto we have attained, let us mind the same things.* Let us labour after this unity of judgment , affection , and action . I beseech you Brethren by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ , that ye all speak the same thing , and that there be no divisions amongst you , but that ye strive perfectly to be joyned together in the same mind , and in the same judgment .

To quicken you hereunto (this being so needful a duty , and we all so dull unto it) let me offer these following forceable Motives to your serious consideration .

1. The seasonableness of the Exhortation : for are not these the last and worst days , the dregs and Lees of times , of which

which our Saviour prophesied, when Christian Love should grow cold, which is the Bond of Peace; and Satan knowing his time but short, should double his diligence in sowing his Tares of cursed contentions in Gods Fold, the proud and malicious hearts of men being too fruitful soils thereof; and of which the Apostle prophesieth, and Saint Jude. Read the places, and see if the men of this Age be not therein exactly described. Alas, when was the Christian World ever more out of quiet? when was Gods Church ever more dangerously rent and torn? when was Schismes and Separations ever more greedily and dangerously made and prosecuted? when was Gods Church on Earth more Militant, or had more Enemies? forreign, abroad, intestine, at home? more Satanical spirits to hate it? more *Lucians* to scoff at it? more *Rabshakah's* to rail on it? or *Balaam's* to curse it? when were there more Atheists to scoff at Religion, (*Ridemur decathimmur*, saith Tert.) more Hereticks to reproach, revile, and slander it? more Schismaticks studying divisions, affecting parties, carrying up-sides and factions, (and being out of danger of the Kings Laws, and

Heb. 10.

24, 25.

Jude v. 11.

contemning the Churches pious Edicts and Censures) like unnatural Children rending and tearing their Mothers Bowels? (*Inimici Domestici.*) Behold the Churches Foes are those of her own Family, her Sons disturb her peace, and the way thereof they will not know. Rom. 3.17. Mistake me not, my design is not to rail, or reflect on any sort of men, but only to warn you as a faithful Watchman to take heed of these deceitful ways: and the very design of this Complaint and Lamentation, that there should be such Troublers of *Israel* abounding amongst us, is only to shew the Exhortation in the Text as necessary; so seasonable, even that we all hearken after the things that make for peace: to speak the same things, and to avoid (if it be possible) these divisions amongst us. So from the seasonableness, pass we

2. To the reasonableness of the Exhortation also, and that in almost infinite respects.

1. Listen to Gods Commands: search the Scriptures Brethren, and find any duty, if you can, more peremptorily commanded, more highly commended by the Holy Ghost, more frequently pressed by the

the Prophets and Apostles than this. How often doth the Gospel of Peace call upon us, to follow peace with all men, if it be possible, and as much as lyeth in us to live peaceably with all men? How much more with Brethren, men of the same Nation, and Church, and Faith; and Religion with our selves? for to such it is written, Be of one mind, live in peace, follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, and Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart. It were endless to give you all the strict Commands of the Gospel to this purpose, without obedience to which we are not real but nominal servants of Jesus Christ, unless we study Unity, and be careful to maintain peace and love, and speak the same things, and avoid divisions, and those that cause them, the World may question our Christianity; which will further appear in all the following considerations: whilst we look upon God, whom we pretend to serve and worship.

2. It is the Apostles Argument amongst many others: *In the Prisoner of the Lord beseech you, that you walk worthy of the Calling wherewith ye are called.* How? With all lowliness, and meekness, and long-suffering,

Heb. 12.14

2 Cor. 13.

11.

2 Cor. 13.

14.

2 Tim. 2.

23.

Eph. 4.1.2.

C 4 suffering,

suffering, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace: For, saith he, there is one Body, one Spirit, one Hope, one Lord, one God, and Father of all. There is but one God, and great reason then we should endeavour unity, and unanimity, and uniformity in the worship and service of this one God. Those that have several Gods, may well have several ways, and several forms to worship them; as the Marriners in *Jonah* called every one upon his God. When several Gods are afoot, all Games must go forward; but now we all profess but one God, unchangeably one, the Maker of Heaven and Earth, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and he is always of one mind, he is not for one thing sometimes, and another thing other times, like a distempered Stomack, but God is still of one and the same mind; and therefore that which pleaseth him at one time, the same words and things, if they proceed from the same heart, must needs find the same acceptance always. No marvel if dissentions arise amongst wicked ones, betwixt *Abimelech* and the men of *Shechem*, seeing they serve divers Masters, have several lusts, one reigning in this, another in that man, all commanding

manding contrary things ; but shall not Christians speak the same things without divisions, that all serve one Lord, and that one being so far from commanding any thing that may occasion discord, that his very living is the Badge and Cognizance of Love and Peace. More particularly, being we professed to worship the Trinity in Unity, and Unity in Trinity, let us consider each Person in the Blessed Trinity.

God the Father he is one, there is one Father of all : If God be our Father, then are we all Brethren to each other. If a man coming into his Neighbours house by chance, should find them all together by the ears, would he not think them disorderly and ill-governed children? how much more if they should be observed to be ever and anon snarling and quarrelling one with another, and beating and kicking one another. Here *Joseph* thought he need say no more to his Brethren to prevent their falling out by the way, than to remind them that they were all one mans Children, and Brethren to each other : And *Abraham* to Gen.45.24 procure an everlasting Amity, and utter cessation of all Debates, thenceforth between himself, and his Nephew *Lot*, and their

their Servants, made use of this one Argument, the most prevalent of all others,

Gen. 13. 8.

Ex. 133 I.

that they were Brethren. *Ecce quam bonum;* Behold how good and joyful a thing it is Brethren to dwell together in unity. Prophane *Esau* durst not avenge himself on *Jacob*, lest he should vex his

Gen. 27. 4. Father *Isaac*: And shall not Christians

then who are Brethren, not only by Generation, but by Regeneration, much more tender the displeasing of their one Father, by disagreements and molestations of one another? the nearer, the dearer, we use to say, and there are few Relations nearer than that of Brotherhood, but no Brotherhood in the world so closely and surely knit together, and with so many and strong tyes, as the Fraternity of Christians in the Communion of Saints, which is the Brotherhood in the Text: And therefore as we are Brethren, and tender the glory of that God who is the Father of us all, it concerns us to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst us.

2. Consider also God the Son; we are all redeemed by that one price of his precious Blood, and methinks that calls for love and unity. It's implied in that of the

the Apostle, *One Faith*: One Faith is Eph 4.5.
fixed on one and the same object, the
Mercy of God, and Merits of Christ, or
Gods Free Grace in Christ, and being in-
grafted into one and the same Vine,
should we not all bear one and the same
fruit? We are all Fellow-Captives re-
deemed by the same Saviour, Fellow-Pa-
tients cured by the same Physician, even
Jesus Christ the object of our Faith.
Hence he that redeemed us did in like
manner pray for us, that we may be one, John 17.
perfectly one, that the world might know 21,23.
that God sent him; but this can never
be, if we speak not the same things, but
there be divisions amongst us.

3. There is also but one Spirit, and
that's the Apostles Argument also: *There*
is one Body, one Spirit, and therefore Eph.4.
deavour the unity of the Spirit. The Spi-
rit is a Spirit of Unity: this Spirit is the
very Essential Unity, Love and Love-knot
of the two Persons, the Father and the
Son, of God with God; yea, it was the
very Union and Love-knot of the two
Natures in Christ, of God and Man: he
is the Spirit of Unity, and therefore can-
not delight in us, unless we keep the uni-
ty of the Spirit: That Spirit, the Soul of
man,

Ezek.35:
7,8,9.

man, that gives life to the natural body, yet can it not animate and give life to members dismembred, unless they be first united and compact together. We read there of the dead and scattered bones, that to the end they might be revived, they first came together, every bone to his bone, then the sinews came and knit them, then the flesh and skin covered them; and then, and not before, the Spirit came from the four Winds to give them life. So the very natural Spirit, the Soul, doth not inform the body, unless there be an accord and unity in it: much more is this required as a proper dispositi-
on to make us meet for the habitation of the Holy Ghost, even this quality that is like that his Nature and Essence, Unity and Unanimity, for us to be of one mind and judgment, and to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst us: divisions are a token we are led by divers Spirits, and not by this one. There is a Spirit indeed in these divisions, but it is an evil spirit, such as was be-
Judges 9. between Abimelech and the men of Shechem: And such as are for a toleration of such divisions, we may write upon them as our Saviour did upon the man possessed, *Le-
gion,*

gion, for they are many; pretend they to the Spirit as they will, of walking and praying by the Spirit, we need not believe them, unleſs we list, to be led by any other than a devillish spirit. The Devil shews himself to be a Devil by his Cloven Foot: if we would receive, and not grieve, nor quench, nor dishonour the one Spirit, by which we pretend all to be governed, let us speak the same things, that there be no divisions amongst us: As we tender the glory of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, we must do this.

3. So while we look upon the Church of God, for that is but one body, which is the Apostles argument also: *It is but one, and only one. My Love, my Dove, my undefiled is one, she is the only one of her Mother.* So are we Christians made all up into *σωμα*, one mystical body; and that by such a real (though mysterious) incorporation, as that we become thereby *καθεις*, as all of us members of Christ, so every one of us members one of another: Nor the sympathy and supply that is between the members of the natural body, for their mutual comfort and good of the whole: The Apostle setteth it forth

Eph. 4.
Cant. 6.
Eph. 3.6.
Rom. 12.5.

1 Cor. 12.

forth elegantly, and applieth it very fully
to the Mystical Body of the Church at
large. It were a thing prodigiously unnatu-
rally, and to every mans apprehension the
effect of a frenzy or madness at the least,
to see the head plot against, the tongue re-
vile, the hands buffet, the teeth devour
his fellow-members. No, if any one mem-
ber, be it never so small and despicable, be
in anguish, the rest are sensible of it:
There is a mutual sympathy and commu-
nication betwixt them; there are no
terms of bitterness stood upon in the na-
tural members, I am better than thou, and
I than thou; no terms of disgrace heard,
(I have no need of thee, nor I of thee)
but they are all ready to contribute their
several supplies according to their several
measures and abilities, to give ease and
relief to the grieved part, *ινα μὴ ξιόψῃ*.

1 Cor. 12.

25.

That there be no rent or scism, saith the
Apostle, using the very word of the Text,
no division or disunion of parts in the
body: And as we may consider the
Church as one Body, so as one Household,
and our selves as fellow-servants of the
same Family, the same household of Faith:
So ought we then to behave our selves in
the House of God, which is the Church of
the

Gal. 6.10.

1 Tim. 3.

15.

the Living God, as becometh fellow-servants that live under the same Master: We all wear one Livery, having all put on Christ by solemn profession at our ho-
1 Cor, 10.
3. 4.
ly Baptism; and we are all fed at one Ta-
ble, eating the same spiritual meat, and
drinking the same spiritual drink in the
holy Communion; and therefore all rea-
son, that as members of the same Body,
and servants of the same Family, we
speak the same things, and there be no di-
visions amongst us. Mr. Baxter in his Care
of Divisions, urgeth two or three things
well in this Topick of the Church, as that
our union with the Church, is a sign of
our proportionable union with Christ;
and our separation from the Church, is a
sign of our separation from Christ; nay,
that union is not only an accident, but of
the very Essence of the Church, without
which it is no Church, and without which
we can be no members of it, Unity being
necessary to the very being of the Church,
and of Christianity; and that our union
is necessary to our nourishment from, and
Communion with Christ and his Church:
but I refer you for these to him, whom
perhaps some will rather hear than us; if
we should speak the same words. I shall
amongst

See it page
66.

amongst many particulars urge only four things, with reference to the Church, that shew the need you have to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst you. This is the only way to forward the work of God for the building up of the Church; which Faction and divisions on the other hand obstruceth, so as nothing more. You often read in Scripture, of edifying the Body of Christ, and of doing all things to edification. The expression is metaphorical, taken from material buildings, often used by the Apostle with application to the Church of God, and the spiritual building thereof; for the Church is the House of the Living God; and all Christian members of this Church are as so many stones of this building, whereof the house is made up: and the bringing in unbelievers into the Church, by converting them to the Christian Faith, is as the fetching of more stones from the Quarries to be laid in the building. Now the building in itself (and that is edification) is the well and orderly joyning together of Christian men as living stones in truth and love, that they speak the same things, and that there be no divisions

Eph. 4.12.

2 Cor. 12.

19.

2 Tim. 3.

15.

hions amongst them, that they may grow together, as it were, into one entire building, to make up a strong and comely house for the Masters use and honour.

(a) Indeed there is nothing more condueth hereunto, than Peace, Love, and Concord: Knowledge is very little or nothing but a puff in comparison of Charity, in order to Edification: (b) It may swell, and look big, and make a shew, but Charity doth the deed: (c) It lays the stones together, and makes them couch close one to another, and binds them up with Fillings and Cement to make them hold. Hence that wise Master-builder S. Paul, that knew well what belongs to this work, when he speaks of compacting the Church into a building, mentions the edifying of it self in love. (d) Indeed when all the Workmen intend the main busness, each in his place and office performing their appointed task with chearfulness and good agreement, then doth the work go on, and the building gets up apace and strongly; but when one man draws one way, and another another way; one will have things done after this fashion; another after that, one mars what another makes, pulls down what

D another

a 1 Per. 2.9

b 1 Cor. 8.1

c 1 Cor. 1.

10.

d Eph. 4.

16.

another sets up, how is it possible while things go thus, that ever the building should be brought to any perfection or handsomeness? and therefore well doth the Apostle joyn these two together, *τὰ τὰς*

εἰρήνην καὶ τὰς εὐδοκίαν. (e) Let us follow after the things that make for peace, and things wherewith we may edifie one another. Where the hearts and tongues of the builders are divided, the building will

either come to nothing, or prove but a *Babel* of confusion: for where envy and strife is, there is confusion, and every evil work. (f) Strife will make ill work, it will build up nothing, unless it be *Babel's* walls: It is peace and concord that builds up the walls of *Jerusalem*, which as it hath its name from peace, so hath it also its perfection from peace; and then, and not before, shall *Jerusalem* be built, as a

city that is at unity in it self; (g) when they that build *Jerusalem* are first at unity amongst themselves, when they speak the same things, and there is no divisions amongst them.

2. As this is the way to build the Church, so it is the way to preserve it both in peace, beauty, and safety.

1. In peace. The concord of Families
is

is their peace , so is amity and concord in the Church ; whereas the divisions and discords of Christians disturbs their minds , and discomposesthe Church : *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*, (b) saith ^{b Psa. 125.} the Psalmist ; but by different forms and ways there is a breach of that peace : such divisions in the Church are like wars and tumults in the Commonwealth , they discompose, and set it out of order. It was Sir Henry Wotton's excellent saying , *Disputandi pruritus Scabies Ecclesie*: The Itch of Disputing doth cause the Seab of the Church. Every Sect finds some little pleasure in scratching, by zealous wranglings and disputes for their several Opinions , till the blood be ready to follow ; and at length it proves the bain of peace, and charity, and love, which is the very life and soul of Christian Religion : Now is not this , or should it not be an effectual Motive to this Unity, Unamity, and Uniformity ? How dear should be the Churches peace to every member thereof ? *Dulce nomen pacis*, the very name of peace sounds sweetly to the ear : there is such a mixture of pleasantness and profitableness in it, as wrapt the Psalmist into admiration , *ut prius miraretur quam ostenderet,*

ret; he admires it himself, and rouzeth others to the like admiration: (i) Behold how good and pleasant a thing it is, Brethren to dwell together in unity: some things are pleasing, not good, as Epicurism and Good-fellowship; some things good, not pleasing, as Fasting and Martyrdom; but this both; for pleasure, it is like the Oyl poured out on Aaron's Head; for goodness, it is like the Dew on Hermon's Hill, which made the Valley's fruitful. So good and pleasant it is, that nothing can be pleasant without it: It is the desire of all heart; the rest of all Nations, the end of all Contentions, pacem et concordem omnes; nothing more desirable in Families, in Kingdoms, much more in the Church: And therefore lest we violate the Churches peace, it concerns us to speak the same things, lest there be no peace but divisions amongst us.

2. It is the way to preserve the Church in beauty and honour; the concord of Christians is their beauty and honour, and their divisions and discord is their deformity and shame. The Church stands upon two Staves, the Staff of Beauty, and the Staff of Bands: if the Staff of Bands be once broken; the Staff of Beauty can-
not

not long stand, but by divisions our Beauty becomes deformity; Reformation deformation: as when one hand is black, and another white, one cheek pale, another red: so whilst we become several Churches, several Bodies, what do we but make a Monster of the Church, the Body of Christ! Indeed nothing more tends to the Churches dishonour, and Christs dishonour, than this: there is no such scandal to the Churches Enemies of all sorts, than this: the common Enemies of the truth of Religion, are chiefly As theism and Superstition; and wherefore serveth the home-differences of Christians, especially about indifferent things, about Gestures, and Vesture, and other indifferent Rites and Formalities, that for such things as these, (things in their own nature indifferent, and never intended to be otherwise imposed, than as matters of circumstances and order) men should desert their Ministerial Charges, fly out of the Church as out of Babylon, stand at open Defiance against lawful Authority, and sharpen their tongues and pens with so much petulance and vitu-
lency as some have done; wherefore servet this, but to the dishonour of Christians

and Christianity, and to give scandal to the Enemies thereof?

1. To the Athiest : for he, till all men be of one Religion, and agreed in every point thereof too, (which I doubt will never be whilst the World lasteth) thinketh it the best wisdom to be of none, nay, makes it his best pastime to jeer at all : The agreement of Christians is an ocular demonstration to the World , that they have a certainty of the Faith which they profess, and that it is of a healing nature, and tendeth to the felicity of the world : so that never was Christians observed to live in an undivided Unity and unsainted love , but the very Infidels and ungodly round about them did reverence both them and their Religion for it ; whereas their discords and divisions give occasion to Atheists and Unbelievers to blaspheme, as if there were no certainty in their belief, or as if it were of a vexatious and destructive tendency : so that never were Christians divided, implacable, and bitter against each other, but it made them and their profession a scorn to the unbelieving and ungodly World. Their despising and vilifying one the other, teaches the wicked to despise and vilifie them all : as a well ordered

ordered Army, and a City of uniform; and comely building is a pleasing and inviting sight to beholders; whereas a confused Rabble and ruinous heap breeds abhorrence; even so the very sight of the concordant society of Christians, is amiable to those without; whereas their disagreements and separations makes them odious. Hence the former conduceth much to the conversion and salvation of men, and the latter hardens men in wickedness, and hinders their coming into the Church, and their obedience to the truth. Who loveth to thrust himself into a fray? and what wise men will joyn with drunken men that are fighting in the streets? A more effectual way cannot be devised to drive men from Christ, than to represent Christians like a company of madmen that are tearing out the throats of one another: when one Faction flies upon, and speaks ill of one another, what wonder if the Atheist and Infidel speak ill of, and flies further from them all? whereas contrarily, the best means to win the World to a love of Holiness, is, if they can see that holiness makes men fervent and unseigned in the love one of another. (k) Christ's words in his prayer
D 4

k 1 Pet. 22.

are

^{1 John 17.} are notable to this purpose: (l) I pray,
^{20, 21, 22,} saith he, for them that shall believe on me
^{23.} through their word, that they all may be
one: As thou Father art in me, and I in
thee, that they also may be one in us, that
the world may believe that thou hast sent
me, &c. It plainly implies, that the Uni-
ty of Christians is a great means of con-
verting the World to the Christian Faith,
and convincing Infidels of the truth of
Christ, as sent by God: and so on the
contrary, their divisions must needs be a
scandal to them. Upon which account al-
so, we have reason to take heed, to speak
the same things, and that there be no di-
visions amongst us.

^{m Gen. 13.} Such divisions give scandal to Pa-
pists. You read how loth was Abraham
to fall out with Lot, and how desirous
he was to compound the differences that
were between their Herdmen; and one
reason is hinted, in that it is said, (m) the
Canaanites and Perizzites dwelt at that
time in the Land. So have we in our Land
many Canaanites and Perizzites at this
day, that take offence at these divisions
of ours, and makes it a chief occasion to
alienate their hearts from the Truth of
God. There be many Papists and Roma-
nists

nists; confirmed and made obstinate in their Opinion of the Catholickness of the Romish Faith. Hereby, when they hear of so many things which have been ever, and are still retained in the Church of *England* in common with the Church of *Rome*, as they were transmitted both to them and us in a continued Line of Succession from our Godly and Orthodox Forefathers, who lived in the Ages next to Christ and his Apostles, to be now inveighed against, and decried as Popish and Superstitious. And when they see men, pretenders to Piety, Purity, and Reformation, more than others, not contenting themselves with those just Exceptions that had been formerly taken by the Church of *England*, and her regular children, against some Erronious Doctrines and Forms of Worship taught and practised in the Church of *Rome*, and endeavoured to be unduly, and by her sole Authority, imposed upon other Churches, when they see them not contenting themselves with these things, but even so far transported with a spirit of contradiction, as that they care not, so as they may but run far enough from *Rome*, whether, or how far they run, although they should

should run themselves (as too oft they do) quite beyond the bounds of Truth, Allegiance, common Reason, and even common Humanity also. Besides, we know it hath been, and is one grand objection of the Papists against the Reformed Churches, that the Fanatical dissensions amongst our selves are evident signs of an Heretical spirit, as *Bellarmino*, *Stapleton*, *Kellison*, and others argue; and *Fitz Simon*, an Irish Jesuite, hath written a whole Volumn on this argument, which he calls *Britanio-Machia*. It's true how unhappy they have prov'd in this pretended Unity, which they make a note of their true Church, any one may judge that will but read the writings of Doctor *Field*, Bishop *Jewel*, and even the late Book of the Excellent Doctor *Stillingfleet* upon this argument, which proves them nevertheless faulty, however we be blame-worthy: As *Gregory Nazianzen* did answer those in his time that used the same argument, οὐεῖς διὰ τὸν ἡρῷον αὐτοῖς ταῦτα ἀμαρτάνουσιν; onely by this methinks we should be warn'd, if by no other consideration, to let such a spirit of peace and meekness shew it self in our lives and doctrines, *ut nihil de nobis male loqui*

Discourse
concerning the I-
dolatry
practised
in the
Church of
Rome, by
D. Edw.
Stilling-
fleet.

loqui sine mendacio possint, that they may never have advantage with the same breath to speak both truly, and reproachfully against us. And to this end, to preserve the Churches beauty and honour, and to stop the mouth of the Adversary, and take away the occasion of scandal, let us speak the same things, and let there be no divisions amongst us. I add,

3. This want of Unity, Unanimity, and Uniformity among those that keep within the pale of the Church, gives scandal to those of the Separation, such Schismaticks and Hereticks as are clean gone out, and have renounced all kind of communion with us; for they must needs think very jollily of themselves and their own singular way, when they shall find those very grounds whereon they have raised their Schism to be so stoutly pleaded for, and pursued by some that are yet content to hold a kind of communion with us: For there are many that will hold those Principles, besides which there can be nothing colourably pretended for inconformity in point of Ceremony and Church-Government, that will not yet admit of such conclusions naturally issuing thence, as will necessary enforce

See Toleration not to be abused.

force an utter separation. The Separatist Tenents are but the Nonconformists Principles improved; and then it is to be feared that the Nonconformist gives the occasion of offence and boasting to the Separatist, he lays the foundation for the others division from us, and so may happily have a right in that of our Saviour,

n Mat: 18.7 (n) Offences will be, (for the tryal of the faith and patience of the Saints) but va homini, mōs to the men (without repen-tance) by whom the occasion of those offend-ees comes. In all these respects then, for the Churches honour, and to avoid that scandal that is thereby given to Atheist, Papist, and Separatist, let us speak the same things, and let there be no divisions amongst us: and as for the Churches beauty and honour, so

3. For the safety thereof; for divisions
1. Invite and encourage the Churches
Enemies.

2. They weaken them to resist them.
1. They invite and encourage the En-
emy, as it is noted of the Ancient Brit-
ains, their intestine contentions invited
the Enemy to conquest. Nothing so much
hearteneth and advantageth the Enemy a-
broad, as the fractions and dissentions that

we

we have at home : *Per discordias ciuiiles exterrit attollunt animas*, said *Livy* once of old *Rome*. Whence our Countryman *Gildas* complained of old of this Island then imbroiled in wars, *fortis ad civilia bella, infirma ad retundenda hostium tela*, that by how much more her valour and strength was spent upon her self in managing of intestine and domestick broils, by so much the more she laid her self open to the outrages and incursions of foreign Enemies; *commune periculum concordia propulsandum*, saith *Tacitus*. The Churches peace and concord is the Tower of *David*, from whence we may repel our Adversaries, whom else we shall by our intestine differences cause to rejoice. If all the members of the Church were but fast joyned together, saith Dr. *Reynolds*,

+ *vinculo fidei & glutine charitatis*, in the bond and cement of Faith and Love; if Governours, Teachers, and People, would but joyn hand in hand, the one to rule with Authority and Meekness, the other to teach with wisdom and compassion, the third to honour, both by humble submission to their judgment, and willing obedience to the guidance of their Governours and Pastors, then would they cut off

+ In his
excellent
Sermon of
the peace
of the
Church.

off all occasion from those that seek occasion, and disappoint the expectations of those that do, *captare tempora impacata & inquieta*, would be fishing in troubled waters. The Devil (as *Optatus* speaks) is tormented with the peace of Brethren, but is quicken'd and put into hopes of success in his attempts against the Church by the mutual ruptures and jealousies, that the members thereof foment and cherish amongst themselves; as when by *Jeroboam's* defection *Judah* and *Israel* were rent asunder, then came *Shishak* and troubled *Jerusalem*: (o) and as divisions invite and incourage the Churches Enemies, so

*2 Chro.
12. 2.*

2. They weaken her to resist them. The unity of Christians is their secondary strength, saith Mr. *Baxter*; their primary strength is Christ, and the Spirit of Grace which quickneth them; and their secondary strength is their union amongst themselves. Separation from Christ depriveth men of the first, and separation one from another depriveth them of the second: evermore *vis unita fortior*; but divisions weaken the Church, and dividers are certainly the weakners and destroyers of the Church: even Satan is sensible

sensible that his Kingdom divided cannot stand , and therefore he keeps an admirable unity in the members thereof; so that a whole Legion, consisting of many thousands of them , had but one name , one action , and one habitation in the man possessed with them : *Concordia res parve crescunt , discordia dilabuntur ;* the wall is hollow and loose where the stones stand off one from another , and couch not close : Now brotherly love and unity is it that bindeth all fast , and makes of loose heaps one entire piece . Observe the expression in the Text ; *I beseech you Brethren , saith the Apostle , that there be no divisions amongst you , but that ye be perfectly joyned together in the same mind , and in the same judgment .* Like-mindedness , you see , is the thing that joyneth all together , and in the well joyning consisteth the strength of any structure : Whence we read of the bond of peace , (p) Eph. 4.3 and the bond of perfectness : (q) An ex- Col 3.14 pression of the like importance you have , (r) That I may hear of your affairs , saith he , that ye stand fast in one spirit , with one mind . Christians never stand so fast as when they are of one mind : whence there is a Greek word sometimes used in the

*f Bishop
Saunders
son's Ser-
mons, p.
270.*

The Obligation of Conscience to Union
 the New Testament, as Bishop Saunderson
 observes, (f) viz. *akrasia*, which is
 commonly translated Confusion, and
 sometimes Tumults; neither of which
 Translations are unfit for the sense; but
 in the Literal Notation it rather imports,
 a kind of unstalement or unsettledness,
 when a thing doth not stand fast, but sha-
 keth and tottereth, and is in danger of
 falling. And this S. Paul opposeth to
 peace; *God is not the Author*, saith he,
morasias of confusion, but of peace. Inti-
 mating by the very opposition, that it is
 mostly for want of peace that things do
 not stand fast, but are ready to fall into
 discords and confusion. S. James speaks
 out what S. Paul but intimateth, and tells
 us plainly, that this *akrasia* is the effect
 of discord, and that contention is the
 Mother of Confusion; for where envy-
 ing and strife is, saith he, there is *akrasia*,
 i.e. unconstancy, unsettledness, confusion,
 and every evil work. The Builders do
 but make ill work where the building is
 not like to stand, but threatneth ruine,
 and is ready to drop down again by that
 time it be well up: yet such ill work doth
 envying and strife ever make; it is con-
 cord and union only that maketh good
 work,

work, and buildeth strong. Let *Jerusalem* be built as a City at unity in it self: (a) and *Jerusalem* is like to stand the faster and longer for it; like *Selenus*, his bundle of Sticks, *insuperabiles dum inseparabilis*, they could not be broken, insuperable while inseparable; such is a Church, a Land, a Corporation, while it is at unity: But O how weak is it when it is divided? like those Rods pulled asunder out of the bundle, which the weakest Child could snap asunder? is not this so in all other things? An Army is stronger than a man, a Kingdom than a Single Person; a Flame burns more strongly than a single Spark; the Waves of the Ocean are more forceable than a single drop; a three-fold Cord is not easily broken. Hence weak Commonwealths seek to strengthen themselves by Confederacies with other Sates. Alas Brethren, many are our spiritual and temporal Enemies, and strong is the League of Impiety that we are to encounter with in this world; our most united Forces, and joyned endeavours, are all little enough against them: And can a few single straglers hope for Victory, when whole Troops of ~~Ab~~, Ammon, and Mount Seir, are to en-

counseled them? Shall Britains still retain their folly whereof Tacitus of old branded them, *dum singuli pugnant universi vincuntur*, whilst they resisted singly, they were overcome universally; being divided, they were destroyed: Thus it was with the Kingdom, and thus it will be with the Church. If we do not speak the same things, but there be, and continue to be divisions amongst us. By several ways, and several forms, we make the Church a very *Babel* of Confusion; and if *Babel's* confusion go before, *Babel's* destruction will follow after: Dividers are certainly *Abaddons*, Destroyers, destroyers of the Church; what good soever they pretend: * As those means which best corroborate the body, and fortifie the spirits, do best cure many particular diseases, which no means would cure while Nature is debilitated; so are the Church Diseases best cured by uniting fortifying remedies, which will be encreased by a dividing way of Reformation: dividing is wounding, and uniting is the closing of the wound. It's Satans usual way to pretend to a good work, when he purposeth to destroy it; he resisteth Light as an Angel of Light; he will be a zealous Reformer,

* Mr. Baxter's cure.

Reformer, when he would hinder Reformation ; and it is Satans mark of Reformation : he doth it by dividing the Church of Christ , and teaching Christians to avoid each other ; and he destroyeth their love to one another , by pretending love to themselves , as if he would have them but to avoid sin and Church-corruptions : and in this dividing work the Devil doth as Make-bates use to do , that first goes to one man , and tell him what such an one said against him , and what a dangerous person he is ; and then go to another , and saith as much of the first to him . So the Devil zealously aggravates the faults of every party to others , that they may have odious thoughts of one another , and so as they love their Souls avoid them . So this dividing Spirit just gives such counsel to men for the preservation of their Souls ; as if a man should thus , in pretended kindness , counsel a man for the preservation of his health , and bodily comfort . O take heed of that Mouth , and that Belly , for it getteth nothing , but devours all that the hands do get by labour ; or cast off that hand , for it hath a crooked finger ; or that gouty foot , that it may not trouble the whole body ; or rip up those guts

which have such filthy excrements in them; is not such kindnes to be suspected? * Behold the Devils wiles and stratagems, be wise, and avoid them, I beseech you; and therefore for the Churches peace, and beauty, and honour, and safety, be exhorted to labour after unity, unanimity, and uniformity, to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst you. These are the third sort of Motives while you look upon the Church of God: But

4. Though ye should have little regard either to God, or the Church of God, yet look upon your selves, even in point of wisdom, and out of self-love; it concerns Christians, every one in his place, to labour to speak the same things with other Christians, and to avoid division from them.

5. For your own safeties sake; for if the whole be in danger, so is every part. Hence the Marriners called upon *Jonah*, *What meanest thou, O sleeper, arise, call upon thy God;* as if they had said, if the whole Ship be lost, so will every Soul in it, and thou amongst the rest. Perhaps some may think their own safety obligeth them to be dividers, to hold up a Faction and

* Thus far
Mr. Baxter.

and Division, or at least not to meddle in their Stations towards the healing them: but to such I say as Mordecai did to Esther, *Think not thou alone shall escape, if thou hold thy peace: O no, O no, deliverance may arise another way, but thou and thy Fathers house shall be destroyed;* therefore if you have respect for your own safety labour for peace, and unity, and unanimity, and uniformity with your Brethren, that you speak, &c.

2. For your own peace also; for this is one way for Christians to attain a peace with God, and man, and themselves. The Apostle speaks of some (*b*) that please not God, but are contrary to all men: I think it may be said of Dividers, Authors, or Fomenters of division, they cannot please God, while they study how to be contrary to all men. I shall not need, saith Dr. Reynolds in his Sermon of the Peace of the Church, to load them with any other guilt than the Apostle doth, that they are not the servants of Christ: (*c*) For how can he who is without peace and love, serve or please that God who is the God of Peace, and whose Name is Love, and whose Law is Love? *Non habent Dei charitatem qui non diligunt Ecclesias.*

d A known place, it is lib. 3. ch. 16. de Baptism. *clefia unitatem ; saith S. Austin ; (d) nor need I to dismiss them with a more fearful Curse than that of the Apostle too ; I would they were even cut off that troubles you.* The *rebels*, the Troublers of *Israel*, must expect trouble and no peace from the God of *Israel*, nor can such have any peace in themselves for being given to change, they are but like Noah's Dove fluttering from place to place, having no rest for the soles of their feet, till they return to the Ark again : They are like children tossed to and fro with every wind of Doctrine, and even when they think themselves fixed, they most-what still have some jealousies remaining in their minds, that possibly they are deceived ; so that they seldom have any rest, unless they come at last to a hardness of heart, and a stupid and benumming in sensual security, crying Peace where there is no Peace ; for no true peace, no true rest is to be had, till they come to this speaking the same things, without division, from their Brethren : How often do we see them like drunken men reeling to and fro, carried from this to that extreme, till they come at last to conclude in Atheism and Infidelity ? whereas by being

They are but like Cain, as fled from the place of rest, so dwelling in the Land of Nod i.e. of wandering. Vid. Dr. Stillingfleet's Sherinah in lucum.

ing united, particular Christians would be strengthened in the truth, having nothing more to do, but to grow in Grace, and make Progress from degrees to degrees in Holiness, which is the very design of Christianity. Indeed ^w but
 33. It concerneth every one to labour after this Unity, if they do: but consider that this alone will put them in a fit posture to receive the blessing of God. It is remarkable, the Psalmist ^e exhorts ^f Psal 134.
 the people, *Bethold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, which stand in the House of the Lord.* Mark, he exhorts them plurally, *Ye, and all ye, bless the Lord;* but in the third verse he prays to God to bless the people singularly, *The Lord bless thee out of Sion.* *Phares habebit ut benedictus, iesse, uni benedictus,* saith S. Austin: He exhorts all to bless the Lord, but he blesseth all from the Lord as one man. It hints, that then God useth to bless his people, when they are at unity as one man. So Christ came to his Disciples with a blessing when they were a rowing together; ^(f) and to his Apostles with ^f M.t 14.
 a blessing of Peace when they were assembled together; ^(g) and he sent his ^g John 20.
 Holy Ghost to them when with one ac. ^{19.}

cord they were met together: And so the Promise runs, Where two or three are met together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them. While Christians disagree in their manner of serving, and blessing, and worshipping God; God will not bless them as He will do, if in one way, and with one mouth and heart they glorifie their Father: if they speak the same things, and there be no divisions among them: if he will hear the prayers of Christians when two or three are united together, how much more when several thousands? nay, not only all in a Congregation, but all in all Congregations throughout a whole Land are united, speaking and asking the same things. In this case, sure if in any, *the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence*, and *the violent taketh it by force*: On the contrary, if there be divisions, we can never be so hopeful in our prayers, for these divisions most-what causeth alienation of affections, and so we cannot pray with such hopes of Audience, because we cannot then lift up pure hands without wrath: the clamour of our boiling malice to each other, will out-cry our prayers; our dissentions will make that sweet Incense

cense stink in Gods Nostrils; and will turn out Prayers into Curses; if we do not speak the same things; but there be divisions amongst us.

Many more Motives I might heap up to enforce our Exhortation; especially that drawn from the many examples we have set before us; as that of God the Father, who being provoked by us, yet by all means seeks peace and union with us; hath sent his Ministers of Reconciliation to beseech us to be reconciled unto him; loadeth us with his blessings; causeth his Sun to shine; and his Rain to fall on us; and all to induce us to be at peace with himself: And can we be partakers of the Divine Nature, or Sons of our Heavenly Father, if we be not Followers of him, as dear Children, in endeavouring to be united one with another? Nay, Christ his Son did become Incarnate to unite us to God; and make our peace with God; yea; and loe, the Prince of Peace came to dwell amongst men for this end; when peace was amongst men in *Augustus's* days; when there was general quiet and union through all the World; and at his Birth the Angels proclaimed peace on Earth,

good

goodwill towards men. O how then can we be Disciples of Christ, and not follow after peace, to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among us? yea, and this Oyl of Charity poured on Christ the Head, did run down to the Beard, yea, unto the skirts of all his garments; for all the Saints of God now in heaven have gone thither in this way of peace: Abraham said to Lot, Let there be no contentions amongst us, for we are Brethren; Stephen prayed for his Persecutors, Father, forgive them. The Saints were ever peace-makers, and not peace-disturbers, or dividers: Nay, very wicked men and Devils are sensible of the benefit of this way of union one with another; therefore did Ephraim and Manasseh agree together against Judah, Herod and Pilate, Scribes and Pharisees against Christ: Nay, very brutish beasts covet an union, *sevis inter se conuenit urbis:* and shall we be more blockish than they? In al word, God stiles himself the God of Peace, Christ the Prince of Peace; his Name is *Immanuel*, a Name of Peace, was Crowned at his Baptism with a Dove, the Emblem of Peace, being in the building of the Church *is regam yorius* a Corner-stone,

stone, the place of Peace, coming into the World with a Song of Peace, and going out of the World with a Legacy of Peace. The Spirit the Bond of Peace, the Gospel the Covenant of Peace, and the word of Reconciliation, Ministers Ambassadors thereof, *Jerusalem* the type of the Church, signifies in the Hebrew Tongue the Vision of Peace; and the bliss in Heaven we all look for, is nothing else but Eternal Peace, where we shall all speak the same things without division to the glory and praise of God: If then we be Sons of the God of Peace, Servants of the Prince of Peace, Temples of the Spirit of Peace, Professors of the Gospel of Peace, if we have any Consolations in the Ministers the Ambassadors of Peace, if we be Citizens of *Jerusalem* the Vision of Peace, and hope to be gathered to our Fathers, to enjoy an eternal Sabbath of Peace; if there be in us any consolation in Christ, any comfort of love, any fellowship of the Spirit, let it be our care to walk by this Rule of Peace, Unity, Unanimity, and Uniformity with our Brethren, to speak the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst us; but let us be perfectly joyned together in

the same mind, and the same judgment; and as many as walk according to this Rule, peace be upon them, and the whole *Israel of God.*

Now that you may see how Christians are to speak the same things, and how they may and must order their endeavours to avoid divisions, give me leave to close my Exhortation with sundry Directions picked out of the *Analogy of Faith.*: The skilful Physician must not only discover the disease, and perswade his Patient to use all means to prevent and remedy it, but he must also direct him what remedies to use, and how to use them. The directions I shall give you, you cannot like the worse, because most of them, I confess, I have (though in a different method) out of that excellent Sermon of Doctor *Edward Reynolds* of the Peace of the Church, to which I have added some Heads, and some inlarge-ments; better I could not find, let him do it that can, such wholesome Rules being therein offered, as would compose the most turbulent spirits to some moderation, if they would walk up to them; and joynly considered, exceedingly con-duc-ing to heal the breaches of the Church of God.

Then

Then by way of caution, that you mi-
stake me not, know, that though you
must speak the same things, and avoid di-
visions, and labour to be of the same
mind and judgment, yet this Exhortati-
on admits of a limitation, it must be on-
ly, if it be possible, and as much as lieth
in you, without any shipwrack of truth
and holiness: For howsoever Unity, U-
nanimity, and Uniformity be well plea-
sing unto God, yet is it not such an Uni-
ty as he desireth, unless it be truth and
peace together; such a peace and unity
as is according to truth and godliness in
Christ Jesus: there may be an agreement
together *in falso*, when men hold together
for the maintenance of one and the same
common errore. Such as is an agreement,
as our Learned Davenant (g) observes.

*g Epist. de
pacificat.*

1. Of Hereticks, in case of Heresies,
when Adversaries speak all the same
things, to deny or deprave the Faith of
the Gospel, as *Hymenius* and *Philetus* did,
(h) who sought to overthrow mens Faith
in the Resurrection.

*b 2 Tim. 2.
18.*

2. Of Idolaters, in case of Idolatry;
(i) if *Israel* play the Harlot, let not *Ju- i Hos. 4.15.
dah* transgress, for *τις οὐχ οἰτάσσεις* what
agreement hath the Temple of God with *k 2 Cor. 6.
Idols?* (k)

*l 16.
3. There*

3. There may be an agreement of Usurpers, in case of Tyranny, when any shall usurp and exercise Domination over the Consciences of men, to bring them into bondage unto Doctrines of Errors, and make Articles of Faith for all Churches to submit unto; as the Romish Church, and especially as the Tridentine Council have done. In which case the Apostle had no patience to give place by subjection to them, no not for one hour.*

*Gal 4,5
Neque enim quisquam nostrum Episcopum se esse Episcorum constituit, aut Tyranno terrore ad obsequendi necessitatem collegas suos adegit, saith S. Cyprian in the Council of Carthage, in the case of Re-baptization (m).

m Lib. de sentent. Episcor. de heretic. rebapt.

n Act 23. 12,13. Yea, 2. There may be an agreement *in malo*, when men combine together in a Confederacy for the compassing of some mischievous design, as did those forty and odd that bound themselves with a Curse to destroy Paul (n):

such as is the agreement of Thieves, Cheats, Drunkards, Whoremongers, and Fornicaters, and Rebels, among themselves: such agreements as these no Christian ought to joyn with, or be of the same mind or judgment with them: The wisdom of the Flesh, and cunning of the Devil.

Devil, will bring men fast enough to those cursed agreements, without which he and his knows well enough, his Kingdom cannot stand. Gods Servants have rather evermore bent themselves by their prayers and endeavours, to dissolve the Glue, and break these Confederacies of the ungodly. *Destroy their tongues*, O Lord, divide them, was holy David's prayer (o). And S. Paul, when he stood before the Sanedrim at Jerusalem, to take off his malicious Accusers the better, perceiving both the Judges and by standers to be of two different Factions, some Pharisees who believ'd a Resurrection, and others Sadduces that denied it, he did wisely to cast a bone amongst them (p). In ^{o Psa. 55. 9.} ^{p Acts 23. 6, 7, 10.} this case then the Rule is certain, that though we must labour for Unity, yet are we ^{q Verie 3.} *inayorishai*, as S. Jude speaks, (q) to contend earnestly for the great things of the Law and Gospel, those that are either Foundations themselves, or are most visibly and immediately adjacent and contiguous to the Foundation. Hence Paul and Barnabas had no small dissention and disputation with the false Brethren, that taught the necessity of Judaic Rites unto Salvation: (r) And Athanasius the Great

Great would not have the Orthodox Brethren to receive τύπον εἰςήγειον any Forms, or Letters, Communications, or Pacificatories, from George the Arrian Persecutor: (f) And Basil the Great (g) giveth an excellent reason of it, ἵνα διὰ τὴν μηδὲντα τὴν τίσιν ἀπὸ τηρουμένων ἀπέτηται τὸν λόγον ἀπόστολος: If once (saith he) we shake the simplicity of the Faith, and retain not that as a Rule and Measure of Inferior Differences, Disputes and Contentions will prove endless; therefore the Unity that must be laboured after, and maintained amongst Christians in the Church, must be a Christian Unity, that is, a happy Concord, in walking together in the same path of truth and godliness. The Word of Christ is the Word of Truth (h); and the Mystery of Christ w i Tim. is the Mystery of Godliness (w); and Christ that is the King of Salem, is the Christ that is the King of Righteousness also (x); Whosoever then is contrary to these, Truth, or Godliness, or Righteousness, cannot be acceptable unto Christ (y): The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable; and our Unity must be the Unity z Eph. 4.3. of the Spirit: (z) *Ea enim sola Ecclesie pax est que Christi pax est;* saith Hilary.

Here

f Auct. B.
pist. 136.

g opt.

lib. 2.

t Epiph. 325.
ad Epiph.

x Col. 1.5.

w i Tim.

3.16.

x Heb. 7.2.

y James 3.

17.

z Eph. 4.3.

Here are our bounds set us; our *we plus ultra*, beyond which if we pass we transgress, and are exorbitant, *usque ad aras*: The Altar-stone is the near stone; all Bonds of Friendship, all Offices of Neighbourhood must give way, when the Honour of God and his Truth lies at stake: we must buy the Truth, and not sell it for any temporal advantages: The Church is Militant, and must maintain Wars with Principalities, and Powers, and Spiritual Wickednesses: and Christ came to send a Sword upon Earth against all dangerous Errors of mind and manners. If peace will be had upon fair terms, or indeed upon any terms (*salvis veritate & pietate*) without impeachment of truth and piety, it ought to be imbraced; but if it will not come upon harder conditions, better let it go. A man may buy Gold too dear: *Follow peace with all men, and holiness*, saith S. Paul, (a) without which no man shall see the Lord; not without which peace, but without which holiness, no man can see the Lord: for the Gender of the Pronoun is not Feminine, not *is χοεις*, but *οχωεις*: without peace some man may see the Lord, having faithfully endeavoured it, though he can-

^a Heb. 12.
14.

not obtain it, (for that is not his fault) but without holiness (which if any man want, it is his own fault only) no man shall see the Lord: Our speaking the same things then, and being joyned together in the same mind and judgment, must have this limitation, so far forth as may stand with Christian truth and godliness. Now for positive directions: To this then joyn
in the second place.

- Direc. 2.* That so the main of truth and godliness be but preserved inviolate, then must Christians, by all means, seek Unity, Unanimity, and Uniformity, to speak the same things. It's true the Heathen said truly, that *nihil minimum in Religione*, yet we know our Saviour distinguiseth between *Mint* and *Cummin*, (*b*) and the great things of the Law. And the Apostolical Synod at Jerusalem, (*c*) between things necessary and unnecessary; and *S. Paul* (*d*) between meats and drinks, and the Kingdom of God; and elsewhere between the Foundation and Superstructure. (*e*) Some truths there are which belong *ad fidem Catholicam*, others which only pertain *ad scientiam Theologicam*: Some are *questiones ritus*, faith *Gregory Nazianzen*, others *mythorum*: some are de-
- b Mat. 23.*
23.
- c Acts 25.*
28.
- d Rom. 14.*
3.
- e 1 Cor. 3.*
10, 11.
- fide,

fide, others *circa fidem*, being such pernicious superindulgents as may bruise and wrench the foundation, others *preter fidem, in quibus salutis fide quæ Christiani sumus, ignoratur verum*, as S. Athanasius speaks (f), in which we may err or be ignorant, believe or suspend without any hazard to the common Faith. In one word, as *Tertullian* distinguisheth of sins, so may we of opinions; some are *quotidiane incuriosi*, such as are usually incident to humane frailty, and some are *dogmata devoratoria salutis*, such as proceed from heretical pride, or blindness. Now though we must, as I said before, contend earnestly for the Faith, the Foundations themselves, (against Heresies, Idolatry, or Tyranny) or such points as are immediately adjacent to the Foundations, yet so long as there is sound agreement in Fundamental Truths, and in the simplicity of the Gospel, we must deny our own wits, and silence our disputes, in matters merely notional, or Canons that have little or no necessary influence into Faith, or godly living, speaking the same things with our Brethren in those matters, rather than spend our precious hours in impertinent contentions: so as for gain of a

^f De peccato Ori-
gin. cap 23

small trifles, to shipwreck a great deal of love, and by perplexing our minds with less matters, take off our thoughts from more necessary and spiritual employments. It was a wise and seasonable rebuke which the Marriners in a dangerous Tempest gave to a Philosopher, who troubled them with an impertinent discourse, *qui auctor ad ipsa you natus*, we perish whilst thou tristest: So is it sad that it can be truly said of any, that (whilst they so wrangle about such questions as gender strife, those, whose poor souls, ready happily to sink under the Tempest of Sin and Death) cry out like the Man of Macedonia in St. Paul's Vision; *Come and help us*; do for want of the plain and compendious way of Faith, Repentance, Good Works, Spiritual Worship, and Evangelical Obedience, which should be taught them, become a prey to the envious man, who while we sleep will be sure to watch, and goes about seeking whom he may devour. O that we would be wise then, by all means to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and in nothing to give offence to the Church of God, but rather silence and smother our *domestica judicia*, our private judgments, and singular

gular fancies and conceits, leaving all small dissensions to *Elias*, *quoniam generis*,
as the *Anepagisti* did some causes to the
hundred year ^(e g) ; being stiff and per-^{12. 10. A Gell.}
emptory in none of these things against
the quiet of Gods Church, but speaking
the same things, even such things that
may make men confess that God is in us
of a truth. *Iacobus ad facili est eter-*
nitas, saith *S. Hilary* excellently; God
leadeth not his people unto life eternal
by knots and inextricable questions, by
verbal wranglings or contentions: *Cu-*
rioseste opus non est, we have no need of
Curiosity, saith *Tertullianus*. Our work is to be
Christians in practice, not Criticks in
doubtful Disputations. We do but mi-
stake the design of Christianity, if we fix
our selves in perplexed conceits and hu-
mours; nay, we pervert it, if we raise
and pursue contentions in the Church,
saith Mr. *Hilderham* (*h*): This is a mark ^{b Up to}
of ungodly and graceless men, such as ^{John 4.23.}
serve not the Lord Jesus, but their own
bellies (*i*). It agrees this with *S. Judes* ^{i Rom. 16.}
description of Seducers in his time (*k*): ^{17. 18.}
On the contrary, every man that fears ^{k Verses 8,}
God, his great care is to love God, and
keep his Commandments (*l*): But as for ^{11 John 5.}
F 3 doubt. ^{2.}

*In Psal. 35.
20.*

doubtful things, hee is often peaceable dis-
position in them, he is of the number of
them that are quiet in the Land: (w) & He
spends not the heat of his zeal about, for,
or against, doubtful Opinions, alterable
Modes, Rites, and circumstances of Religion,
they are things too weak to lay much
weight upon them, being so little service-
able or disserviceable to the very design
and frame of Christianity, further than as
our humility, and obedience, and meek-
ness, and other Christian Graces, are exer-
cised and manifested by them: Indeed an
eager defending or opposing such kind of
things, is (to use the similitude of an ex-
cellent Person) like the Apes blowing at
the Gloworm, which affords neither light
nor heat: nay, by woful experience we
find it very injurious to the very design
of Christianity, as that which often har-
dens Atheistically disposed persons, when
they observe the contentions of Christi-
ans about matters of this nature, for
thereby they oftentimes take a measure of their
whole Religion; and besides an eager
concernedness about indifferent things,
is too ordinarily accompanied with a
luke-warm, or rather frozen indifferencies
concerning the most important points, and
the

The de-
sign of
Christiani-
ty by
M Fowler.

the Indispensables of Christianity. It is too visibly apparent to be denied (saith Mr. Fowler) that those that have such a scalding hot Zeal either for, or against things of no certainty, and no necessity, are many of them (as their Predecessors the Pharisees were) in the very other Extreme, as to not a few of the weightiest matters of Religion: wherefore in these things I beseech you, so as Fundamentals of Faith and Godliness be but preserved inviolate, let us speak the same things, and let there be no divisions amongst us. To this end

3. Let our great care be an ~~united~~ and ~~labour~~, a joyn^t obedience to the truth wherein we all agree, and pursuance of those pious ends we all profess. It's the Apostles Rule, this is the very case; (n) *whereunto we have already attained*, saith he, *let us walk by the same Rule*, let us ^{n Phil.} 10. mind the same things; for this we must know, that the love of God, and Conscience of his Commandments, is the right way to know him, and the secrets of his Word. *Si in Christi lumine ambulare volamus, à preceptis ejus & monitis non recedamus*, saith S. Cypr. If any man will do the will of God, he shall know the Do-

¶ John 7.
 17.
 ¶ John 1.
 2,3,4.
 ¶ Psa. 118.
 7 Lib. 6.
 1 p. 29.
 ¶ 1 Tim. 6.
 3.

Strive, saith Christ (o), Hereby we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments, saith S. John (p). Those things which we learn to do, we learn by doing, saith Aristotle. *Nisi fidelium operum usus processerit doctrina cognitio non apprehendetur*, saith S. Hilary (q). The right knowledge of Divine Truth is not only intellectual for the Brain, but experimental for the Conscience, and consisteth much in the taste of spiritual things. *Quod in cibis gustus, in sacris intellectus*, saith S. Basil. *Vide omnes parvo ingenio, literis nullis, ut bene agerent peragendo consecutos*, saith Pliny (r). Hence that expression of the Apostle, (s). Knowledge according to Godliness; They therefore that resolve to make it their daily care to keep a good Conscience, are most likely by the other helps of Learning and Industry, to find out the truths wherein Christians are apt to disagree: for the very Heathen Philosopher Aristotle could say, *κακία φερτική δένει*, wickedness putrefies the principles of the mind, and that such as are mens courses of life, such are likewise the dispositions of their minds towards practical truths: A corrupt heart usually makes a corrupt judgment. *Dum his*

biis que volumus doctrinam coaptamus, let us not then be like Painters that can draw a Ship on a Table; but can build none for use; such as can write a discourse of Doctrines in Papers, but not express it in our lives; but by an unanimous obedience to the truths we know, let us dispose ourselves for the discovery of those we know not; that's one good way to bring us to speak the same things, and to prevent divisions amongst us.

4. To this joyn't obedience in things wherein we all agree, let us add a moderation of the fervour of our zeal, against those that are contrary-minded in the things wherein we differ. There is in the nature of many men a certain *Beguiling*, an heat and activeness of spirit, which then principally, when conversant about objects Divine, and matters of Conscience, is wonderful apt, without a due corrective of wisdom and knowledge, to break forth into intemperate carriage to disturb peace, and occasion divisions. It was zeal in the Woman which persecuted S. Paul, (t) and zeal in him too, which persecuted Christ before he knew him (u). If Devotion be blind, and not ruled by Knowledge, and if Zeal be like Quicksilver

beguiling
Virtue
of a
Zeal

^t Acts 13.
^u Phil. 3.6.
Acts 26.9.

silver not allayed, nor reduced to usefulness by wisdom and mature Learning, it often proves the occasion of much unquiet in the Church: Through this zeal, Truth it self is often stretched too far, and by a vehement dislike of Error on the one side, men often run into an Error of the other. As *Dionysius Alexandrinus* being too fervent against *Sabellius* laid the grounds of *Arrianism*: And *S. Chrysostom* is observed, in zeal against the *Maniches*, to have too much extolled the Power of Nature: And *Acosta* observes of *S. Jerom*, that *ardore feriens adversarias premitt interdum socios*. So are there many who out of a hatred of the Papists, run into other extremes of Enthusiasm or Prophaneness: Yea, by this misguided zeal it is, that men do sometimes marvellously alienate the minds of one another from peace, by loading the contrary Doctrines with envious consequences, which the Consciences of the Adversaries do abhor: which course usually tend to Exacerbation, whereby Truth never gaineth so much as Charity and Peace do lose. It's true, Acrimony and sharpness of rebuke is sometimes necessary, towards men of obstinate and pernicious

*Vide Dod.
Holdsworth's
Lett. 40.
p. 350.*

pernicious minds (y); but amongst Brethren, yea Adversaries that are not incorrigible, all things ought to be carried with lenity and meekness (z), and with a mutual ~~ουγαρτοβασις~~ or condescension to one anothers weaknesses (a). *Sepis non nos non nocet,* (Epiphanius Heres. 36.) *vessa quod acris pungit minus ledit.* He observes, that there be some Creatures, that the more they sting, the less they hurt: And so in any dispute, that man doth less hurt with his Argument, than betakes himself to biting and intemperate Language. In these things then we should carry ourselves, saith Doctor Reynolds, *non enemis, sed amicis*, as Brethren, not as Enemies, not to uncover the nakedness of our Brethren. But as it is said of Athanasius the Great, *dissidentibus magnis*; by his meekness he drew those that dissented from him; so should we (if it be possible) make the truth a gainer by our mild handling of them that vary from us. Christ himself did devest himself of his Glory and Majesty, to descend to our vileness, and bear with our infirmities; so should we imitate the example of our Master, according to that grave advice of Nazianzen *καὶ τὸν ἴησον*

^y Titus 1.

13.

Gal. 2. 5.

^x Gal. 6. 1.

& 5. 13.

2 Tim. 2.

15.

^a Rom. 15.

1.

xīcōfusv

xiijij; let us yield to our Brethren that we may overcome them, as a Flint is easily broken upon a Pillow that yields to it.

b. Cor. 10. 14. 15. (b) Let no man seek his own, but every man anothers wealth ; even as I please all men in all things, saith the Apostle , not seeking my own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved. Patience and condescension, so far as we can lawfully, is the true Uniter and Peace-maker.

Prov. 15. 1. (c) The soft answer breaketh wrath, but crois and thwarting language and practise rather strengthens it : The hasty Spirit begins the fray , saith Bishop Saunderson , the patient spirit must end it, if it ever be ended, that we may all speak the same things, and that there may be no divisions amongst us. I know your Minister cannot say these things , but some will say, he is far from practising what he teacheth : but I pray be not so rash in censuring , so to hinder your selves of the benefit of these wholesome directions ; it is his care to use the Rod , and the Spirit of Meekness , both in their due places , and if he mistake through weakness , do you pity and pray for him , and do your own parts the more carefully .

5. To this end also , and to moderate
our

our zeal, according to the fourth direction, be we cloathed with Humility : Our knowledge is apt to beget Pride, and Pride is the Mother of Contention : Only by Pride cometh Contention, saith Solomon ; *He that is of a proud spirit stirreth up strife* (*d*). Yea, it is the Mother of Heresies, whereas Humility is the chief breeder and preserver of Unity. Hence the Apostle, when he exhorts to unity and love, he tells us first, that we must with all meekness, and holiness, and long-suffering, forbear one another, or else we can never keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (*e*) : And when he exhorts (*f*), to be of one accord, and one mind, he tells us, (*g*), that if we would do so, we must in lowliness of mind esteem each other better than our selves : As the juice of the same Earth is sweet in the Grape, but bitter in Wormwood ; as the same Odour is a refreshment to the Dove, but a Poyson to the Scarabæus or Beetle, so the same Learning and Knowledge, qualified with Charity and Humility, is admirable useful to edifie the Church, which with pride and contempt of others is most mischievous and dangerous. Ever therefore let us

^d Prov. 28.

25.

^e Eph. 4.

2,3.

^f Phil. 2,2.^g Verle, 8.

us be careful to correct and keep down the rising of our knowledge by humility, not censuring or despiling one another. Pride made the *Dozatists* to forsake the Catholick Unity, which *S. Cyprian* (in the same judgment, but with more humility) did not disturb. Humility in weak ones would make them docile and tractable, if they were but sensible of their own blindness in the things of God, they would lay aside their private conceits, and not rack the Scriptures, to say something for them (as *Demosthenes* said of the Oracle, that it did *μαρτυρεῖν*) but they would then resign up their judgments to the light of Gods Word, and clear Reason, and when these errors are discovered, hold their peace. And humility in strong ones would make them far from censuring their Brethren, would put them in the form of servants and cloath them with *πιλασθασία*, Brotherly Love, which is *magnus persuadendi artifex*, a very great means to work on others judgments, to take off all such impediments as usually rise from personal prejudices in the disquisition of truth. When *Benhadad's* servants observed the word (Brother) to come out of *Abbas* mouth,

mouth, they hastily laid hold on it, as an excellent preparation to settle those differences which were betwixt those two Princes (b). It was a good temper in ^{b 1 King}
Calvin, who professed, that though ^{20, 33.} *Luther* should call him Devil, (for he knew his heat,) yet would he still acknowledge him for an excellent Servant of God. O that there were the same affections in us! Had we this humility, it would make the one condescend to the others weakness, and the other willing to learn any (though unwelcom) Truth, and unlearn any (though darling) error, it would make them obey with duty what they are not able with reason to gainsay; and so we should doubtless speak the same things, and there would be no divisions amongst us.

6. As to this end we must moderate the fervour of our zeal with patience, and mutual condescensions, and humility, so must we ever set our zeal upon the right object, even upon our selves. Censurousness of others, is a chief cause of divisions and differences amongst us. It was this that *S. Paul* discerned in the *Romans* (i), the weak were censorious of ^{i Rom. 15.} the strong, and the strong disdained the weak;

weak; but neither of both did look into the other end of the Wallet, to examine thoroughly their own spirits. We used to say, if every one would mend one, all would be well: I, but there are many ready to mend, not only one, but ten, a thousand, all about them? Every one would be mending one, but not the right one; his Brother, but not himself. O the falseness and hypocrisy of mens hearts blinded with self-love! Thus doth it fill the world with divisions and offences: The disease is hypocrisy, as the Great Physician shews (i); the symptoms are to be cat-eyed outward in readily espying something in a Brothers eye, even the smallest Moat, and to be Bat-eyed inward, in not perceiving a Beam in a mans own eye. And a third symptom is to be tampering with a Brothers eyes, and offering his service, to help him out with a Moat there, before he think a thought of doing anything towards the clearing of his own eyes. The remedy is to begin at home; if we put things in their right order, the business is done; *in conversus confirmata fratres*, strengthen thy Brethren what thou canst: Is is a good office, and must not be neglected, but something more needful is first

*i Luke 6.
41, 42.*

first to be done, that thou mayest do that much better, be converted thy self first, be reformed first, ~~τότε διαβάθμις~~, (k) then & Luke 5. shall thou see clearly to remove the Moat ⁴². out of thy Brothers eye; be sure first thy self be converted, and then in Gods Name deal with thy weak Brother as thou feelest cause, and strengthen him. O that those would consider this that are so forward to censure others, especially their Superiours! Magistrates and Ministers actions, ever and anon complaining, how ill things are carried by them, and yet never take notice of their own sins, frauds, oppressions, sacrileges, and insolencies, or pievishness, and other enormities. Let such turn their eyes homewards otherwhiles, obsevve how their own Pulses beat, and go learn what that is. Thou Hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye. Believe it, we shall never grow to Christian unanimity in any tollerable measure, whilst this censorious spirit reigns in us, and while we do not chiefly employ our care and endeavour in reforming our selves. This, I think, well practised, would conduce much to this speaking the same things, and the healing of divisions amongst us. So would it,

7. If we would keep our selves in our own Stations, and labour to do God service in the Places and Callings wherein he hath set us, and not ~~ἀλλοτριοεπισκοπής~~
rise our selves in other mens matters, which, as the Apostle speaks, are ~~ἀμετέ~~
unsuitable to us, and without our measure (1). By this one thing hath the Church of *Rome* caused a great Schism in the Christian World, because she doth ~~ἐπεκτείνει~~ stretch her self above her measure, and not content her self with that degree which belongeth to her. It is excellent counsel of *Solomon*, not only in a case he there put, but in divers others:

m Eccl. 10. (m) If the Spirit of the Ruler rise up against thee, leave not thy place. *E sede itio*, may with a little heat turn into *sed itio*, saith Doctor *Reynolds*. *Quidam in corpore Christi oculi quidem manus*, saith *S. Basil*: All are not eyes and hands in the Body of Christ, to take upon them the burden of great affairs. Are all Apostles, saith *S. Paul*? are all Prophets? are all Teachers? hath not God dealt to every man a several measure? hath he not placed every man in a several order? have we not all work to do in our own places? must we needs rush into the labours, and intrude

intrude our selves into the busines of other men? *Hec magistro relinquat Aristoteli, canere ipse docet.* It was a sharp rebuke of Tully against *Aristoxenus* the Musitian, who would needs turn Philosopher: whereunto agreeth the Answer of *Basil* the Great to the Clerk of the Emperours Kitchin, when he jeered him for his soundness against the Arrian Faction, *εν ταῖς ταῦταις καρκίναις οὐδὲν λέγειν.* Your business, it is to look to the seasoning of your Broth, and not to revile the Doctrine or Doctrines of the Church. All these do commend the Apostles Exhortation unto you, let every one study to be quiet, to do his own business. * The Connexion more ^{* 1 Thes. 4:11.} than intimates, the next way to be quiet abroad, is to be busie at home: We shall never learn well to be quiet, unless we learn also to keep our own busines. The excellent Bishop *Lany* hath fully discovered, how guilty of the contrary hereof are both the Pope, the Covenanter, and Sectary, in his Sermon on this Text, *Qui-
etness is the natural and genuine effect of
orderly keeping in our Callings, and Sta-
tions, and our own business.* For all discord must be between two, either persons, or parties; and that which commonly kin-

See Dott.
Lany, Bi-
shop of E-
l, upon
this Text:

dles the Fire is envy, or some supposed injury. Now he that minds his own business only, can give no occasion to others, of either envy or complaint; and so in recompence of keeping to his own business, he shall sit quietly under his own Vine, and under his own Fig-tree. Let none of us then out of ambition, discontent, emulation, or any other Polipragmatical distemper, grow weary of our own imployments, and interpose ourselves in things that are without, and above our order: But according to the

^{1 Cor. 7.} Apostles rule, (*n*) Let every one abide in his calling, and keep the station wherein God hath set him, and this will be an excellent help to our speaking the same things, our unity, unanimity, and uniformity, and that there be no divisions amongst us.

8. To this add also: Remember that ~~overcom~~ enjoyned by the Apostle (*o*),

^{1 Thm. 12.} be wise unto sobriety. When you are to

deal with things divine, set bounds to your selves, that you break not through to gaze (*p*): think not to draw every thing in Religion to the rule of your own crooked presumptuous Reason, to give a *quoniam* of every thing in Faith! Upon

^{p Exod. 11.}
12-21.

this

this account it is that S. Paul charges the *Colossians* (q), to take heed of Philo-^{q Col. 2.8.}phy, and vain deceits; not but that there is admirable use of sound Philosophy, and of Reason raised and rectified, so long as it is subordinate to Faith: but when Reason shall be so proud as to judge of Faith it self, and admit or reject it, as it shall be consonant or disagreeing to her prejudice, this is a Tyranny which will quickly overthrow all: Other cause than this there hath been none of the desperate Heresies wherewith the *scoptinians* have pestered the World, but that they will have all truths to stand or fall at the Tribunal of their presumptuous Reason. Happy we, and the Church of God, if all curious Novelties in sacred things be esteemed profane: Modesty becomes Christians, especially *cum de Deo agitur*, as Seneca said; be we wise to sobriety: This would confer much to our speaking the same things, and to take away divisions from amongst us; and of this advice the two next will be a full explication and improvement. So let that be the

9. *Anadysia nisus*, keep your selves close to the form of sound words (r). ^{Rom. 10.}

G. 3

^{2 Tim 1.} Thore 13.

Those words and Doctrines which accord best with the grounds of Faith and love in Christ, those which ascribe most glory to God, and the Grace of God, and which most conduce to the humbling and abasing of the pride of man, which most tends to the practice of godliness, to the purifying of Conscience, and edifying of the Body of Christ. It is a weighty saying of S. Austin (*s*), *Non parum inter est ad Christianam pietatem quibus vocibus utamur*: It is of no little moment to Christian Piety what words we use; they must be according to godliness (*t*), and our knowledge, the knowledge of the truth according to godliness. To which add

s. De Civ. Dei lib. 10. c. 23. *¶ Tim. 6.* 10. Συνέδεται, Be sure to retain and bear reverence to the customs of the Church of God: *Contra fundatissimum morem nemo sentiat* (*n*): Let no man be in love with his private sentiments, contrary to the Churches well-grounded Customs. *Nemo nobis molestias exhibeat sic enim sensit ac docet Sancta Dei Ecclesia ab origine.* Epiphan. in Anchorat. Let no man trouble us in these things, for thus the Holy Church thought and taught from the beginning. *In quibus nihil certi statuit Scriptura*

tura mos populi Dei & instituta majorum
pro lege tenenda sunt, saith S. Austin; * A known
Where the Word of God determines no
certainty, and where there is no express
and evident variation from Divine Au-
thority, there must be the Customs and
received practices of the Ancient and pure
Ages of the Church, and Constitutions of
her Pastors, be retained as a Law, and to
contemn and oppugn them, he some-
where calls it *insolentissima insania*, a
most proud or insolent madness; only this
Rule must be qualified with this necessary
limitation, that no Authority hath any
Authority in matters of Faith, Worship,
or Doctrine of Religion, to prescribe or
deliver any thing, as in it self, and imme-
diately obligatory to Conscience, which
is either contradicted or omitted in the
Word of God; for that we believe to be
fully sufficient to make the man of God
perfect, and thoroughly furnished to e-
very good work (x); but as for matters
accessary, of indifference, order, decency, ^{x 2 Tim. 3,} 15, 17.
and inferior nature, and in matters of
testimony to the truths of Scripture, and
for manifesting the succession, flourishing,
and harmony of Doctrine, through all A-
ges of the Church, the godly Learned

Vide Litterer's Reformed Presbyterian, Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Mr. Baxter's Disputation with several other Authors.

* *Cal. Inst. lib. 1. cap. 10. Sect. 30.* purely Humane, but Divine: * Sure I am, that we should retain and observe them, seems to be enjoyned by Scriptures. Inquire of the former time, saith *Bildad*, and prepare thy self to the search of their Fathers (y). Look the old way, saith *Jer. 6. 16.* the Prophet (z). It was not so from the beginning, saith our Saviour (a). And what a high valuation *S. Paul* sets upon the Customs of the Church, appears by his arguing (b): If any man seems to be contentious, we have no such Custom, neither the Churches of God: He is there reproving the *Corinthians* Innovation of Women praying uncovered, and men covered. This ill fashion *S. Paul* confuteth with several reasons, drawn from the power

b 1 Cor. 11. 16.

power of Man over his Wife , appealing also to natural decency therein ; and at last concludes with this close , that they could alledge no such Custom in Gods Churches , and to run counter to the Universal practice of Christianity , is a note of contentiousnes , if any man seem , &c . Now if a Church-Custom carried weight with it in S. Paul's time , when among Christians , it could not be of above forty years standing , what a Reverence is due then to those Customs that are continued in Gods Church ever since it was gathered ; which are like *Melchisedecks* (c) , without Father , without Mother , c Heb. 7.3. or without dissent , whose first original cannot be found out ? which began at the first , or near the first , and so should in all reason , and good manners , be continued till the last coming of our Saviour .

* The great Objection I know is , that these Customs and Ceremonies injoyned , are an impeachment of our Christian Liberty ; but methinks to scruple at them , and hazard the Churches Peace , and our Superiours displeasure for them , should rather impeach our Liberty indeed , especially considering that they are not urged as obligatory to Conscience , *per se* , in them-

* See this
well an-
swered in
Dr. Edw.
Stilling-
fleet's Ire-
nicum ,
page 56.

themselves, but only as they are imposed by Lawful Authority, for Orders sake. And whatever such are commanded by the Churches Customs, or our Superiors Commands, or convenient circumstances, our Christian Liberty consists in this, that we have leave to do them; and our refusing to comply with these, can hardly proceed from any thing better, than a proud affectation of singularity, or at best a superstitious scrupulosity in us. Sure I am the Apostle implicitly brands it with contention; and therefore to submit to them, and retain and observe them, it is an excellent way to this speaking the same things, and that there be no divisions amongst us.

11. To this end also I exhort you to an ἀπειρωτόντα, a not having the Faith of God with respect of persons (d): Take heed of partiality, or making yourselves the servants of men (e), an enthralling your judgments to the fancies of any Sect or Party, but rather cast to bear an equal affection to Truth and Piety by whomsoever it be professed; for Truth and Piety is Gods, wheresoever it grows, as a Mine of Gold or Silver is the Princes, in whose ground soever it be
d James 2. 1.
e 1 Cor. 7. 23.
disco-

discovered : ἐπροσώποις χειρισμούσις ἀλλὰ τίνος χαρακτήρα. The contrary to this is as great an occasion of divisions as any I know of. It was S. Austin's complaint of the *Donatists* in his time : if one came amongst them, and assured them of his Religion, *Christianus sum*; that he was Baptized, *fidelis sum*; that he lived in the Churches Peace, *Catholicus sum*: *Christianus*, *fidelis*, *Catholicus*, all would not serve the turn to be imbraced by them: an Unity with Christians in his Catholick Church would not do it, he must hold of another head, or else be no Saint: *Donatus* his Ear-mark must be set upon him, or he be rejected. It is the very case this of the dividers of this Age; be a man never so good a Christian, never so pious or peaceable, damned he is, to hell he must go, if he joyn not himself to a Side and Faction, which by many is nick-named their Friends, their Brethren. (by way of appropriation) the Godly, the Kingdom of Christ, and the like. Every one is partial to his own side he takes to, beyond all reason, ready to justifie them in their most suspitious Enterprizes, and to extenuate their most palpable excesses, and as ready to misconstrue the most iustifiable

stifiable actions of the adverse part ; yea, to aggravate to the utmost their most pardonable and smallest aberations ; what is this but at once to justifie the Guilty, and condemn the Innocent ? either of which alone is an abomination unto the

f Pro. 17. Lord (f). Hitherto appertains that which
15. the Apostle calls , having mens persons in

g Jude 16. admiration (g) : for there be many that have such a high Opinion of some men, that they are apt to receive whatsoever they deliver as the undoubted Oracles of God , though perhaps wanting both probability and proof : And on the other side , they have such a prejudice against some others , though perhaps of better worth, greater Learning, and more real Piety, and sounder judgment , as to suspect and disgust every thing that comes from them , (especially if it doth not *sæpere ad pallatum*) let them lay down their Doctrine never so clearly, or prove it never so substantially. Thus partial affections to a Side, or to a Party, corrupts the judgments of men, and inclines them very naturally to divisions : And so long as men are thus carried away with such partialities and prejudice , they shall never rightly perform their duties either to

God

God or man. Now, I beseech you Brethren, let us otherwise learn Christ, let us content our selves with Christs Lives, and as such hear his Voice. We have our Faith and Appellation from Christ, not from any other person; let us not upon any these undue respects to any party of men, hold or let go Truth, or Piety, or Unity, and so make Merchandise of it; contrary to that of *Solomon*,

(b) *Buy the Truth, and sell it not.* The ^b Pro. 28. Orthodox Believers in the Primitive ^{23.} Church, did ever keep themselves to the style of *Antioch Christians*, refusing the Name of *Petriani* or *Pauliani*, or *Pais Donati*, I am of *Paul*, or I of *Peter*, or I of *Donatus*: thus let us do, let us lay aside all dividing names and affections to any party, for those do naturally hinder us from speaking the same things, and do uphold divisions amongst us: Therefore laying aside all such partiality,

12. Let us all joyn our forces unanimously against the Common Adversary: Just as *David* did, when his Brethren the *Jews* had provoked him much, yet could not he be stirred up to fight against them, but used all his skill and force against the *Philistines* (i). It is promised as a blessed

ⁱ Sam. 17.7, 12.
fruit

fruit of the Gospel , which every godly man prayeth for, and desireth to see, that *the Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb, and the Leopard shall lye down with the Kid, and the Calf, and the young Lyon, and the Fatling be together, and a little Child shall*

lead them (k): That Ephraim and Judah shall cease to annoy and vex one another,

verse 13. (l) but all should fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines, and spoil them of the East.

O that we could see this day , that we could lay aside our civil ennemities to joyn together against our common Adversaries; this would be an happiness upon earth, almost heavenly , if we could so speak the same things , that there were no divisions amongst us.

13. To this end let us follow peace joyntly , and the things that make for mutual peace and unity : Let each of us, in our several places, not only have pious affections therunto , but also put to all our skill and wisdom , and cast about for the most proper and seasonable means conducing to so good an end. *διώκεσθαι.* It is not enough for every one of us to accept it, or desire it, or meet it half way, or let it in, or welcom it when it comes , but we must prosecute , pursue , and go after it:

We

We must venture our selves for it to a
forte, & quantum in nobis, if by any
means we may overtake and apprehend it.
Let peace and unity be our rule, not in-
ungling our Consciences by scruples
where we need not, taking the way that
leads to the Land of Peace and Promise,
not by Mount *Ebal*, by pride, and malice,
and ambition, and Schismatical contenti-
ons, but by Mount *Gerizim*, by humility,
and charity, and meekness, and unanimi-
ty, and piety. Thus let us do that we may
all speak the same things, and that there
be no divisions amongst us.

14. Yet when all those Rules are ob-
served, except the Lord build the house,
they labour but in vain that build it. *Paul*
may plant, and *Apollo* may water, but his
blessing is it which must perfect all. By
all these convincing reasons and insinua-
tions, we can but work upon your out-
ward senses, and by the sense represent fit
motives to your understandings: It is
God only that can bow and frame your
hearts to peace and unity; we may per-
suade to unity, unanimity, and uniformi-
ty, and some of you may wish it, but if
the God of Peace do not set in with us, it
will not take effect. *Non persuaderis eti-*
am si

am si persuaseris, It is God that shall per-
 swade *Japhet* to dwell in the House of
Shem (*m*) ; *Noah's* persuasions will not
 do it, nor *Shem's*, though they should
 speak with the tongues of men and An-
 gels : Let God persuade *Japhet*, and *Ja-
 phet* will be persuaded ; God is a Lover
 of Concord, and the Author of Peace.
 Alas, without him, what can be expected
 from us, whose disposition, by reason of
 that pride that aboundeth in us, are na-
 turally turbulent and self-willed. The
 heart of man is a four piece of Clay, won-
 drous stubborn and churlish, not to be
 wrought upon but by an Almighty Pow-
 er. What man is able to take down his
 own pride sufficiently ? (many a good
 man have more ado with this one Viper
 than with all other his corruptions be-
 sides :) but how much less is any man a-
 ble to subdue and beat down the pride of
 another mans spirit ? only God, with the
 strength of his Arm, is able to throw
 down every exalting thought, and to lay
 the highest Mountains level with the low-
 est Flats. It is he alone that can infuse a
 spirit into us, that will eat out, by de-
 grees, that canker'd proud flesh, that
 breedeth all vexations and contentions :

He

He can subdue that self-love that is in every mans bosom, and make us so vile in our own eyes, that whereas we are naturally prone to esteem better of our selves than of all other men, we shall, through lowliness of mind, esteem every other man better than our selves (n): In vain ^{Phil. 2.3} shall we Wrestle with our own corruptions, though we put to all our strength, and wrestle with great wrestlings; as ^{Gen. 30.9} Jacob said upon the birth of *Neptali* (o), so long as we wrestle with them only. We must therefore to the use of all other means, a joyn't obedience to agreed truths, moderation of zeal wherein we differ, humility, reflecting our censures and zeal upon our selves chiefly, keeping within our Callings; sobriety, closeness to the form of sound words, and the Churches Customs; impartiality, uniting against the common Adversary, and following peace by all means. To them all we must add our wrestlings with the Almighty (as Jacob did) by our importunate and unceasant prayers, for this blessing of Peace and Unity. Pray for the Peace of *Jerusalem*, that he would repair the breaches, and build up the walls thereof; that he would give his Word of Peace ^a

H free

free passage into the heads and hearts, into the consciences and conversations of all his people; that so we all speaking the same things, without divisions amongst us, may grow up together unto a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; which the Lord grant for the merits and mercies of his beloved Son Jesus Christ the Righteous, to whom with the Father and the Blessed Spirit, three Persons, and one Immortal and only wise God, be all Glory, Praise, and Thanksgiving, now and for evermore. *Amen.*

F I N I S.

THE
OBLIGATION
 OF
CONSCIENCE
 Not to forsake
PUBLICK ASSEMBLIES.

Hebrewes. 10. 25.

*Not forsaking the assembling of our selves
 together, as the manner of some is.*

Before I close with my Text, give me leave to shew you in a few words, what great reasons I have to make choice of it, for the subject of my present discourse. These are three, My duty, Your necessity, and all Our comfort.

1. My duty in respect of the Church of God; as a Member, but especially as a Minister thereof. As a Member, for it is every Christians duty, to inform himself by the best meanes he can, how it fareth with the Church of God, but especially to

to take notice of, and be affected with the State of that particular Church, whereof he is an immediate member. Men are most what too inquisitive of news, behold this is the news we should inquire after. When Gods people were in battel against the Philistines, and had the Ark of God with them in the Camp, it is said (*a*) that old *Eli*, sate upon a seat in the way side watching and heatknng, how Gods people sped ; and the reason is given for his heart trembled, for the Ark of God, therefore he sate watching, that he might hear what became of it. So when there came one to *David* out of the Camp of *Israel* (*b*) *David* was very inquisitive how it fared with the Lords host : How went the matter (saith he) I pray thee tell me. The like you see in *Nehemiah*, (*c*) so soon as *Hanania* came to him, the first question he asked him, was concerning the state of Gods people that dwelt at *Jerusalem*, though he waited nothing himself being a Courtier in great place and favour, with that mighty King, yet could he not but inquire of, and be affected with the state of Gods people. Nay *Moses* being in the height of honour in *Pharohs* Court did not onely inquire, but went out to his brethren

a Sam. 4.

13.

b 2 Sam. 1.

3.4.

c Neh. 1.2.

brethren and looked on their burdens (d), ^{d Exodus.}
 All these examples teach us that it is our
 duty, as to inform our selves about so
 to consider the burdens of Gods Church,
 and be affected with the miseries thereof,
 and every one in our several places, to
 have a care of the cause of Religion in the
 world, and especially we ought continu-
 ally to importune the Lord in behalf therea-
 of, and never forget it in our prayers to
 God. Ye that have escaped the sword (e) ^{e Jeremiah}
stand not still remember; the Lord afar off, ^{f Isai. 62.}
and let Jerusalem come into your mind. ^{5. 50.}
 Ye that are the Lords remembrancers, saith
 the Prophet Esay (f) *keep not silence and* ^{67.}
give him no rest, till he establish, and till
he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth.
Jerusalem is like to become a reproach, an
hissing to the world more and more, if
 things go on as they do, but we there-
 fore that are the Lords Solicitors and Re-
 membrancers, (as all the Faithful are)
 should (like the importunate Widdow in
 the Gospel) give him no rest, till he have
 established and settled his Church in truth
 and peace, and so give them beauty and
 glory, even in the sight of their enemies, so
 did Nehemiah (g) *he sat down and wept* ^{g Nehe. 14.}
and mourned certain dayes, and fasted and
prayed

prayed for the Churches miseries, by this means he had wonderful success in his suite to the King in their behalf. So might we the poorest and meanest of us all, help Gods Church very much, and prevail with God and against her enemies, if we would so cry, and weep, and pray before God for her. (*b*) When *Moses* held up his hands *Israel* prevailed; and when he let his hands fall, *Amalek* prevailed, Alas! our hearts and hands are heavy in prayer and therefore doth *Amalek* prevail so much as he doth, and *Israel* receiveth so many foiles, and is afflicted with so many successions of miseries. Such is the duty then of every Christian, much more it is of every Minister of the Church, as to inform himself about, and to be affected with, so unceasingly to pray for it, yea and to prayer to joyn all his indeavours to rebuke and oppose all the enemies thereof, secret or open, whether they be without or within the Church: it is no standing a neuter in the holy wars of Gods people. He that is not with the Church to assist her, to the utmost of his power, is against it. *Meroz* is to be cursed that will not come out to the help of the Lord and his servants against the mighty.

The

The zeal of Gods servants was alwayes ^b Judges 5.
 stirring and active to stop any Schismaticks
 or Hereticks that did in any Age rise up
 in and against the Church of God. When
 in the Church of *Corinth*, there did but
 spring up a contention about so mean a ceremony as covering and uncovering their heads in prayer; (a very inconsiderable ceremony in comparison) yet he that was ^{a Text} strangely urged in the late Civil wars ^{now implacably if we care less of the Churchs welfare.}
 ever ready to become all things to all men, that by all means he might win some, did then bestir himself by all means to oppose them in their presumptuous violations of the customes and orders established in their Churches, though it was but in and about indifferent things (*i.*) such is the duty then of every Christian member, much more of every Minister of the Church of God, and so is it my duty in particular as to take notice of and pray against, so as much as lieth in me to oppose all the Church enemies, and that's one reason why I choose this text, *Not forsaking, &c.* And as my duty engageth me to this choice, so, ^{i Cor. 11. 16,}

2. Your necessity for there is none of you all, but you have great need to be well gounded in matters of the Churches Peace, and Unity, as well as, in any other points of Religion, else will you be in continual danger

danger of being seduced, and so falling from your Baptism and Christian Profession; either on the right hand or on the left. For there are abundance of false Prophets gone out into the world, never was Satan more let loose; never was there greater Swarms of Locusts flying out of the bottomless pit, never was the Church more pestered with Schismes and Heresies; never was there more broachers and foymenors of them; and these as they are most diligent, lying in wait to deceive, they'll Compass sea and land to gather profelytes, so have they all necessary artifices and tricks of subtillity in order to that end. *4 Col. 2. 4.* they have *παρενομοῦσαι* (k) enticeing words to beguile poor souls, and *κυβελῶν παρεγγέλλειν* (l) Slight and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive; they have a great deal of cunning even such as chears and coggers at dice do use, much craft to beguile and circumvent them that they deal with, there is no safety in giving them the least audience, or having any thing to do with them, for these seducers (as our experience teacheth us, and Gods spirit hath often admonished us) have a notable veine of persuading, being able to use many reasons that at first sight, carry in them

them great probability, and shew of truthe: hence it is that many there be who have at first wondered at the gross absurdities in contrary Religion, and have thought them such as might be answered by any simple man, and so have scorned and abhorred them, that yet by being over confident of themselves, and careless in intermixing familiarity with those Seducers, have quickly been over born and fallen into the pit of damnable errors, such need there is Beloved, for every one to ground themselves carefully in the knowledg of the truth, as that they may not be so easily turned out of the right way, but may make straight paths for their feet, that they may go steadily and strongly in it, (m) Alas they that are Children in understanding and wavering, they are easily carried away with every wind of vain Doctrine (n), and the most pernicious and damnable seducers, do easily prevail with simple women, that are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, (o) they daily beguile unstable souls, (p) So great is p. Peter, your need then to be rightly informed in the knowledg of the truth, and to be well grounded in your religion, least you be unaware seduced to error and destruction.

Self-confidence sel-dom stands firmly in a day of trial witness Peter at Chrysapphenion-

m Heb. 12: 13.

n Ephes. 4: 14.

o 2 Tim. 3: 6,7.

p. Peter,

K on

on, and that's another reason of my choosing the Text, *Not forsaking, &c,*

3. Another reason, it is in order to all our joy and comfort, for the fullness of our Church Assemblies, and if men could be dissuaded from forsaking them, it could not but be matter of great joy and comfort to every truely pious heart. Such a one cannot but rejoice in the frequency and fullness of the publick Assemblies of the Church, and in the Prosperity of the true Religion, and right worship of God.

How marvellously did Gods people rejoice in the dayes of *David*, when the Ark

^{q 1 Chr. 15.} God was brought to *Jerusalem* (q). And in the dayes of *Hezekiah* when the sacraments had been celebrated according to its first institution, which it had not been of long time before (r), So when *Nehemiah* had purged the house and worship of God from the corruptions thereof, and restored

^{r 2 Chr. 5.} ^{26. 27.} it to it's primitive purity, It is said (s) the people rejoiced with great joy, their wives also and their children rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.

^{t Neh. 12.} ^{v. 43.} And in *Ezra*, (t) all Gods people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord because the foundation of the house was laid so *David* to aggravate the misery of his pre-

dicted

sent estate (v) he speakes of the joy and ^{v Psal 43.} comfort, he formerly took in going to ^{4.} the house of God with a multitude of them that kept holy day. And in that great joy the people of God had at the celebration of the passover in *Hezekiahs* time. This is expressed for one cause thereof, that the number of the communicants was so great (w) *for there Assembled to Jerusalem* ^{w 2. Chro.} *much people, to keeep the passover a very* ^{30. 26.} *great congregation.* On the other side the faithful and truely pious have ever grieved to hear or see that the Assemblies of the Church are unfrequented or neglected, or that any false or Schismatical worship, or congregations were set up in stead thereof. Old *Eli* was much more afflicted for takeing a way of Gods arke then for the slaughter of the people, or for the death of his own two Sons *Hophni* and *Phinehas* (x), in like manner, the Holy Ghost ^{x 1 Sam 4:} noteth of his daughter in law, that being ^{17.} in extremities of her pain and anguish, it would never out of her mouth while breath was in her body, *that the glory was departed from Israel, for the ark of God was taken away* (y), so was it this ^{y 1 Sam. 4.} that troubled that zealous man of God ^{22.} *Elijah*, and made him weary of his life (z),

^a Kings 19. *The children of Israel have forsaken thy co-*
^b venant, saith he (that is, they are fallen
 from thy holy Religion) *they have thrown*
down thy holy altars, (that is, they have
abolished, and shewn, contempt and hatred
to thy holy worship) and why should I then
desire to live any longer in such a time? And
 for the Eclipse of Church Assemblies, we
 have a notable expression (*a*) *I will gather*
^c Zeph. 3, *them saith the Lord that are sorrowful for so-*
^d 18. *lemne Assemblies, who are of them to whom*
the reproach of it was a burden: in which
 Text we may observe five things.

1. That it was one of the greatest sor-
 rowes of Gods people, in their captivite,
 that they then wanted their solemne As-
 semblies; doubtless they might have then
 some Religious meetings for Gods worship,
 (yea they had publique fasts then four
 times a year as appears (*b*) yet their Assem-
 blies was nothing so solemne, or so po-
 pulous, as they was want to be at *Jerusa-*
lem, that was their grief.

2. The Caldeans their enemies was want
 to reproach them for this, and to say to
 them to this effect, *where are your solemne*
^e Lam. 1. 7. *Assemblies now* (*c*) *they did mock at their*
Sabbaths, they rejoiced and reproached o-
ver them, because they could have no such
Assemblies

Assemblies as they was wont to have, just
as many wicked ones do now mock at our
Churches, and their ministers, because peo-
ple (having the reins loosed) may with-
out fear forsake the publique Assemblies,
to erect private conventicles for them-
selves, and do what they list as some can
say to our very faces now.

3. The Text saith *this was a burden to*
Gods people, to have this reproach cast up-
on them, as it is certainly to every true
Protestant and godly man, to hear of the
separatists insolent taunts to the congregati-
ons of the Church and the ministers there-
of.

4. Of these that were so sorrowful for the
solemne Assemblies, the Lord saith to his
Church these are of thee, they are natural &
kindly children of the true Church, that
do stand thus affected.

5. To them he doth make a promise, I
will gather them, saith the Lord : I will have
a special respect to them, and though they
be scattered and dispersed, not one of them
shall be lost, but *I will bring them back a-*
gain to their one Land. I will gather them,
saith the Lord, *that are sorrowful for the*
solemne Assemblies who are of thee, to whom
the reproach of it, was a burden. Indeed

it

it is a burden to every one that hath a true love and zeal of God in him, to see Religion suffer the least ecclipse in any kind, in any place, to lose any thing of that lustre of purity, sincerity or power, that once it had. Hence when the foundation of the Temple was laid, under *Zorobabel*, Gods people that had seen no better rejoiced in it : but the Priests, and *Levites*, and chief of the fathers, who were Ancient men, that had seen the first house, *they wept with a loud voice, while the rest shouted for joy*(b).

b z.a. 3 why? O it grieved their hearts, to see how far short that house, which God was now to have, came short in beauty and glory, of that that God had had before in *Jerusalem*. For as much then as it is every ones duty especially the ministers, to consider the State of the Churches and especially that of which they are members, and ministers, to be affected with them, and to pray for them, and by all means to oppose the enemies thereof. And there is none of us, but stand in great need to be well grounded in these points that relate to the Church, least we be seduced by the cunning and diligence of seducers, that are abroad in the world, and all our comfort will be augmented, if by the light

of

ue reason, and Gods word preached from
Texts (as this I have read) we can
event the Apostacy of any from the
church, and can discover the wickedness
those that are dayly forsaking the Af-
semblies thereof. And it cannot but be
itter of greatest grief to the truly godly
to see the solemne Assemblies neglected,
unfrequented, or private congregations
settled in opposition unto them. All
these particulars shew I have great reason
to make choice of the Text and such like
unto it, till I have so fully discharged my
duty and discovered the mind of God out
of the Scriptures about it, that I may leave
the forsaking of our Church assemblies in-
excusable, so that they can never plead Ig-
norance of their duty and sin, and that I
may say *liberavi animam meam*, I have deli-
vered mine own soul. To this end and
purpose have I pitched on the Text.

*Not forsaking the Assembling of our
selves together, as the manner of some*

For the coherence of the Text, I
shall wish you to look no further back
than the 22 verse. For the Apostle haveing
in the former part of the Chapter shewn
them, that the Sacrifice of Christs body,

which he once offered, hath for ever taken away sin. He presleth thence a double exhortation. The first in 22 vese let us draw near to God, how? even in and through Christ, *with a true heart and full assurance offaith, &c.* And the Second is in the 23 verse. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering :* that is, this Doctrine of Christ sacrificed and the merits thereof; The truth we have received from Christ, let us avow it, and not in time of tryal upon any condition forsake it. Now this exhortation he strengtheneth, by giving of directions, for furthering their obedience thereunto: the first is, Christians mutually stirring up, and sharpening one another amongst themselves; that is a special help to constancy in the true Religion, and a preservative against Apostacy, together with a godly striving one with another, who shall be first in love and well-doing: vers. 24. *Let us consider one another to provoke to love and good works.* And,

2. Another means to this end, is the frequenting Christian congregations & assemblies. So comes in my Text. *Not forsaking &c.* In the words you have evidently two parts.

2. A Taxation of some for the neglect of that duty.

1. The duty is to keep close to, and not to forsake the Assemblies of the Church.

2. The fault taxed in some amongst them is, that in Schism, or pride, or purpose of Apostacie they withdrew themselves from these Church assemblies, and so fell back again, or were in the way offalling back, to the open denial of Christ : for separation from the true Church, or the Christian society of the faithful therein, is a remarkable sin, tending to lead men by Schism to Apostacy, from the profession of the true faith.

1. Of the duty of Christians in order to their proving constant in the true Religion : even to keep close unto, and not forsake the assemblies of the Church. The word for assemblies in the Text hath a very great emphasis in it, it is a tricomposite *εποικουμενη* the preposition *επι* as both *Calvin* and *Hemingius* upon the place observe signifies *novam accessionem*, an increase or addition of some more members to a body congregated, And these were the converted Gentiles, that being converted to the faith became one with the Jews one and the same body of Christ. *Estius* observes,

observes, that because the Apostle here writes to the Jewes, therefore, for the Christian Assemblies he useth the word Synagogue, because he would not vary from their phrase or custome of Speech any more then needs. But might it not be some private meetings? some separate assemblies in a corner that he calls by this name, and here speakes of? O no, Interpreters with one consent, generally interpret it of the publique assemblies of the Church in such publique places, as are by Christian Magistrates, or by the Rulers of the Church, if the Magistrates be not Christian, appointed for the publique worship of God. *Not forsaking the Assembling of themselves, that is, saith the London Annotations* the publique congregation of the faithful, wherein the word of God is taught, the sacraments administered, and common prayer and publique Thanksgiving are offered up unto God; for unto such publique congregations hath God promised his blessing: where hath he promised it? Marke, the Scriptures quoted by the Assembly for it are these (d) *one thing have I desired of the Lord that I might dwell in the house of the Lord all the dayes of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his holy*

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Psal. 27.4.

boly Temple ; for herein is implied this promise, that in the Temple, the house of God, there will God let us see his beauty.

Another text quoted by them is (e) *I was glad, when they said let us go into the house* ^{e Psal. 122.} _{1.}

of the Lord, our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem, thither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

Of such assemblies therefore, even of such as go into the said House of God, whither the tribes, the Multitude of the right worshippers of God, go up to pray unto, and praise him, of these doth our Text speak.

Not forsaking the assembling &c. And to these Assemblies the Annotations quote that special promise, as belonging unto them (f) *Where two or three are met together in my name,* that is, for pray-

^{f Mat. 23.} er and other Religious offices, there am I in the midst of them.

Christ promiseth his gracious assistance to, and presence with his Church be it great and numerous, or be it small, and with the publique and solemn congregation thereof.

Yes, say the Schismaticks, where ever two or three are met together there is he in the midst of them, therefore the promise is to us, or any of the Saints, wherever, or how few soever they be

be that thus meet together. There is no Text wherein the Separatist take Sanctuary more than this, but very unsoundly. For as the Reverend Mr. Ball expounds that place (in his tryal of the grounds tending to separation) pag 280 , by the context it appears Christ is there speaking of the Validity of the sentence of excommunication, and certainly Christ's meaning is not that every Society that consisteth of two or three believers met together to pray or preach, have the power to excommunicate : for no one example can be Alledged out of Scripture or Ecclesiastical History of the ancient Churches, wherein any number of the Faithful, did ever lawfully excommunicate or judg any Member of their Society, without their Guides and lawful Officers, moderateing the action. There is no promise can be shewed out of Holy Writ, wherein any such authority is bequeathed to two or three private Believers, Disciples or Brethren. O, no, but the very tenour of the words is to argue from the less to the greater thus, If Christ be present with two or three gathered together in his name to ask things agreeable to his will , he will much more confirm in heaven what ever his officers and servants that have power from Christ

to

to do this service in the Church in his name shall determine and conclude according to his will: but they cannot meet together in his name, for this or any other holy office, that meet together in way of Schism, contrary to his will. *Quomodo possunt duo aut tres in nomine Christi colligi quos constat a Christo & ab eis Ecclesia separant,* saith S. Ciprian, how can they be met together in the name of Christ that do manifestly separate themselves from Christ and his Church. *Cum Heresies & Schismata nata sunt, dum conventicula sibi diversa constituunt veritatis caput & originem relinquunt,* when Heresies and Schisms arise, & the maintainers of them make separate conventicles for themselves, they forsake Christ the Lord and fountain of Truth & peace. It is the Church and they that keep within the pale of the Chuch by unity and concord to whom this promise runs to give them, what, they meet together in his name to ask of him, and to be in the midst of them *I will be,* saith he, *in the midst of them,* That is, of them that fear me, and keep my precept of peace and truth, *Non homines ab ecclesia dividit, qui fecit, & instituit ecclesiam, sed exprobrans discordiam perfidis, & sedibus pacem suam voce commendans, ostendit magis esse se cum duobus aut tribus unanimiter orantibus quam cum decedentibus pluribus*

*pluribus, plusque impetrari posse paucorum
concordi prece quam discordi multorum o-*

De Unitate ratione. Saith S. Cyprian (g) Surely our Ecclesie as I find him quored by Doct. For^rbes in his Irenicum, Saviour doth not by this promise, warrant divisions from that Church, which he himself hath made and gathered, but rather upbraiding the contentions of the perfidious, and commanding unity and unanimity to the faithful, he teacheth us that he will rather be with two or three of them met together with one accord in his name, and according to his appointment, then with multitudes of them that depart from them, and that he will rather answer the uniform prayers of a few peaceable believers, then the jarring prayers of many that divide themselves into sides and factions. Can they think that Christ will be in the midst of them, that are met together out of the Church of Christ? Nay though such should suffer Martyrdome in the confession of his name, yet cannot that blot and stain of their Schism be washed away in their blood, *Inexpialis & gravis culpa discordiae nec passione purgatur*, the great and inexpiable fault of separation and dissention cannot be purged by the most bitter passion or suffering, *Esse martyr non potest qui in ecclesia non est*, he cannot be

be a true martyr that keeps not unity in the Church, *Ad regnum pervenire non poterit qui eam quæ regnatura est, derelinquit.* He cannot attain the Kingdome, that forsakes her, that must reign in it. It was peace that Christ gave us and bequeathed unto us. It is concord and unanimity that he hath commanded us. He hath strictly enjoyned us to keep the covenants of love and Charity pure and inviolate. So that he can never prove a right Martyr for the truth that keeps not Charity with the brethren. (*b*) though I have faith so as to remove moun-
tains, or bestow all my goods upon the poor, or give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth nothing. God himself is love, and therefore they that break the bond of love, can never have God. God cannot be in the midst of them; so that it is not to private conventicles that this promise runs, but to the publique con-
gregations of the Church of which my Text here speaks. *Not forsaking the Assem- bling of your selves as the manner of some is.* My way being thus clear, and the meaning of the Text being thus made out and explained, I shall from what is said, raise this observation and prosecute it.

b Cor.
12 2.

That it is the undoubted duty of all pious Christians, Doch:

Christians, that desire to prove constant to the true Religion to frequent and not to neglect the publique Assemblies of the Church. Which truth that I may prove undenyable and convince the judgments of all that are teachable, and will not stop their ears against the truth, I will proceed in these gradual propositions,

Prop.

*i Mat. 4
103*

The First shall be the furthest off, but the foundation of all the rest, taken from the end of Religious Assemblies, even this, That God is to be worshiped: Adorability is due and proper unto God. There is such infinite absolute perfection in the divine nature, as necessarily calls for religious worship at the creatures hands, with this truth our blessed Saviour repelled that great temptation of the Devil to fall down and worship him (*i*), *It is written thou shall worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.* This worship is due unto God, and is due unto God only, for he alone is qualified with those properties, and attributes, *omniscience, omnipresence, omnipotence, &c.* that are necessary to make a being Adorable, & so with him no creature can claim a partnership in divine Adoration and religious worship, without great Sacriledg, nor can any be given to it, without

our gross, and abominable Idolatry? by this are the Papists therefore convinced of grievous Idolatry, in that they worship those things with a religious worship, which are no proper objects thereof; as Images, and Saints, and the like. But I only name this Proposition, because it is alien from the Text, though the foundation of all that is to be said of it.

Those from whom this worship is due unto God, are all intelligent rational creatures, by the very obligation of nature. Indeed though there had never any been created by God to worship him, God had continued in his essential perfections as firm as ever. But being it was his good will to make the world, and rational creatures in it to adore him, there is therefore a natural obligation lying upon them, as his creatures, to worship him, and so, own their being, dependence, and preservation, as the product of their Creators goodness: what can be more just and equitable than for a depending being to adore the fountain of his being, and of his both present and future welfare? or what higher piece of unreasonable injustice can there be, then for the creatures to slight him from whom they drew life, & breath, and all? In a word God hath endued Angels, and men especially, with minds

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and

and understandings for this very end, that they might know, honour, and adore him. He made all things, but them especially for himself, to do homage to him, and therein lies their natural obligation to serve and

Prop. 3. worship him.

As for pure spiritual beings, such as Angels are; they need not (being incorporeal) be circumstantiated, either to time or place in rendering this actual worship to God.

1. They are not tyed to any time, strictly so called, because their very nature is measured by Eternity, and not by time; and, being of a spiritual nature, they have neither those avocations, by any particular calling, nor necessary diversions from Gods worship, as man, if he had continued innocent, must have had, for the very sustaining of his life, and being, which would have been even in Paradise, by ordinary means, by seasonable food. It is therefore Probable they have no set times, but continue constant in the immediate worship of God, unless when God applyes them as *πειρατα, λητηγικοι*, as his ministering spirits for the service of his Church; and then perhaps their even then imployments, speakes them only distant from the other Angels, their fellow worshippers, and not absent

absent from the real worship & service of God.

2. Thus it appears they are not limited to any place neither, as they are not to any limited time of worship ; for they being Spirits are incapable of any local circumscription : As for any further knowledge of the manner and circumstances of the Angels worshipping and adoring of God, Scriptures have a deep silence concerning it, and it is a learned Ignorance for us to sit down satisfied and contented without the knowledge of that which God hath thought unnecessary to be revealed, indeed to inquire any further thereinto, may run us upon the rock of bold and unsafe conjectures in those matters, the knowldg of which we may well spare , without the least prejudice of our present comfort, or our future salvation So come we to the.

Though the Angels , being pure spiritual beings, are not yet, the sons of men (being of a mixt nature partly Spirit, and partly Body) by their very beings are determined both to time and place, in their rendering to actual worship unto God. The very same reasons that do evince a necessity of worship to be given unto God, by such creatures as are partly body and partly spirit, will insert necessity of makeing time and place the inseparable adjuncts thereof.

1. Nature dictates clearly, that some time
is necessary to worship God in. For man,
being part body, and part spirit, is naturally
obliged to worship God with both external
and internal worship ; to glorifie God
<sup>1 Cor. 6.
20.</sup> both with body and spirit, which are
his (a). Now all, especially external
actions of man, must necessarily claim some
time for the performance of them, nor can
man conveniently set upon Gods worship
unless some time be set a part, wherein he
may be freed and disintangled, from his or-
dinary workes and imployments. Thus far
time and worship seemes to fall under one
and the same command ; for as God in creat-
ing the world, did concreate time together
with the world : so, when God commands
any religious worship to be performed by
men, he withal implicitly commands the
necessary circumstance of some time, where-
in it may be performed, and it being highly
rational, that the disposal of that time should
be at the pleasure of God ; whose the
worship is ; therefore hath it pleased him
to set a part some portion of our time, even
a seventh part, when he might have required
all, indulging us the rest, even the six parts
to be imployed according to the necessity
of our nature. Such is Gods infinite goodnes

and

and condescension of love unto us, to allow
so large a portion of our time for our selves.
And therefore they act most basely and disin-
geniously, not to say highly dishonourably a-
gainst God, who grudge him so small a pitance,
as who would rob him of it, or by world-
employments or pleasures, drinking, or sports,
or idleness profane it.

2. Very light of nature also teacheth some
place to be necessary for man to worship
God in, because every body, such as man
is, must by the very necessity of its being,
be contained in some real place, and indeed
to be in a place, is so proper for a body,
as we may as well suppose it not to have a
being, as not to admit of a local circum-
scription; neither can a body be, nor exist,
nor operate, nor perform any action, unless
it be in some place, and therefore the wor-
ship of God being an external action necessa-
rily require a place for it. So come I to
this,

*To see a first
proposition
may be seen
handled
more largely
by Dr. John
Stilling
fleet in his
Shenna.*

3. That worship that is due unto God from
these rational Beings, the more publique it is
the better it is: so you see I come near to
the matter of my Text. I say the worship
which is due unto God the more publique
it is, the better it is, the greater and the
more visible is the joynct concurrence and Af-

Prop.

sembling together of several worshippers, for the performance of the same action of religious worship, the more acceptable it is to God. This appears by several considerations.

1. By Gods manifold precepts, both in the old and new Testament, injoyning several acts of publique worship; such were the commands of circumcision, and the solemne convocation, and ordinance of the Pasceover, under the Law, their several feasts, and their sacrifices, wth the infinite rites appertaining to them, and the sundry precepts for Baptism and the Lords Supper, and publique Prayers, and confessions unto God, and collections for the poor, those sacrifices well pleasing unto God under the Gospel. These and others are outward visible publique acts of divine worship, required by God himself.

2. By publique performing of worship to God we stir up and mutually inflame each others zeal and devotion unto God, and so the more publique religious worship is, the more acceptable it is unto God, in respect of others. Sr. Austin in his confession saith, that he was almost ravished with the Songs and Prayers of the Church & Congregation, so that the spiritual comfort, which he conceived by the sweet and heavenly

heavenly matter, which then the Christians joynly and orderly made, and in their publique Assemblies, made him weep for joy. And, I believe, there's scarce any Christian, but he hath sometimes felt his heart moved and affected towards God, in actions of publique worship, especially if uniformly and lively performed, more then at other times.

3. Publique worship is excellent, as publique in respect of our selves, for our joyning in them is a badge of our profession; its a wearing of Gods livery; and confessing God before men, it shewes to all the world, that we are not ashamed to profess his word and Gospell, and our belief thereof, end obedience thereunto. And on the contrary our forsaking the publique assemblies, wherein God is rightly and purely worshiped, borders upon a Apostacy, and is the next door to denying of God, and our profession of Catholick Christianity.

4. It is excellent, as publique, in respect of God, for the more publique it is, the more it tends, to the honour and glory of God, being a publique testimony and acknowledgement of our dependence upon, and piety to him before all the world, as with the heart we believe, so with the mouth we make publique confession of God unto Salvation:

as we have light of grace within us, so hereby it shineth forth before men, that they may see our good works, and glorifie our Father in heaven Christ tells us that a candle is not lighted to be put under a bushel. *Bono debetur manifestatio*, saith the Father, our good must be made manifest; therefore candles that have *bonum lucis* the goodness of light, must not be thrust, *Sub malo cerebrarum*, under the evil of darkness; So that if the candle of light be in our soules, that is, if we inwardly worship God in our hearts and spirits, we must set it upon a candlestick, our inward piety, and worship must appear in our outward and publique worship of God before all the world.

5. The acceptation of publique worship with God above private, is *de facto*, notorious by manifest reason of the thing: particularly it is evident in publique prayer, for if the prayer of one righteous man can avail much, how much more will it when the prayers of many ascends up to the Lord. This must needs offer violence to the Kingdome of heaven, and *the violent shall take it by force*. Surely in every congregation there are some truly righteous, and their presence cannot but bring down mercies on those others whose prayers for themselves have no promise to be heard

ward non aequa exorcas quum salus Dominum obturas, saith the Father. Thou doest not so scot obtain thy desire, when thou prayest alone, as when in the assemblies of the Brethren, for in those Assemblies there is some thing more then prayers even the concord, and consent, and joyning in Love and Charitey, and the cry of the Priest, whose office it is, to make intercession for the people, and, being of the stronger size, to carry a long with them the weak prayers of the people, and carry them unto heaven, *Quod quis apud seipsum precatus accipere non poterit huc cum multitudine precatus accipit.* Quare? quia si non propria virtus tam concordia multum potest. The thing that a man cannot obtain by himself alone, praying together with the multitude he shall obtain, why? because when his own worth cannot, yet the concord and union of the Assembly may avail much. It is no reproach to call the Churches Liturgy Common prayer, the more common it is the better it is, and the more effectual; when, nor onely two or three but a whole Congregation are joyned, nay, all the Congregations of a whole nation do in the same words put their Common petitions and supplicatiens, O what a shrill noise must this needs make in the ears of God. St. Jerom likened it to a thunder clap. St. Eastl

to

The Obligation of Conscience.

to the roaring of the Sea, it is like the several strings of a Well tuned instrument that makes a ravishing harmony, as the flame of one stick is nothing to that of a bundle on fire together, such is the devotion of one man to that of a whole Assembly, *vis unita fortior*, force united is somuch the stronger, a three-fold cable is hardly broken. So do the joyn^t prayers of Gods people united, and publique-ly put up unto God, move him as it were omnipotently and irresistably, they mount up to heaven, they rap at the gates and cannot easily be denyed entrance, like as the petition of a whole Corporation is more available to a King then the single petition of any particular person such is the power and profit of publique worship and devotion, And that by the way is a forceable argument to disswade the truely Religious from forsaking the assemblies, that the fifth Proposition, the more publique religious worship is, the better it is.

Prop. 6. The next in order is this. That divine worship may be truely publique. There is requisite the free and full assembling of our selves together in a publique place, set a part for the same. So you see I come home to my Text, so set it home upon your judgments & consciences with fulness of evidences, and strength

strength of reason, as well as Holy Scripture. Give me leave to prosecute this Proposition by parts. To publique worship; to make it publique there is requisite the assembling of Minister and people in a publique place.

1. Of Minister. His presence is necessary, unless in case of unremoveable impediment, as some sudden sickness, or some weighty cause of absence; for he is a person set apart for the administration of Gods publique worship, he is consecrated to draw nigh unto God, he is by office an Ambassador or Messenger between God and man. Gods mouth, an Ambassador to the people, appointed to beseech them in Gods stead to be reconciled unto him. And he is the peoples mouth and Ambassador unto God, to offer up their requests for grace and mercy unto him. Gods mouth to them in preaching, and their mouth unto God in prayer. Hence (c) the Priests are required to put up petitions and supplications. Let the Priests, the Priest, of the Lord stand between the Porch and the Altar, and say spare thy people, good Lord spare them, And as under the Law it was the Priests office to burn incense, and Uzziah was smitten of God with a loathsome leprosy for usurping it. So still under the Gospel it is the Ministerial office to offer the Sacrifice of publicque

c Joel. 2.18.

*dRom. 10.
10.*

lique prayer unto God, which is as sweet smelling incense in the nostrils of God, and for preaching the word is express, how shall they preach unless they be sent, (d) how able so ever they be to teach the word and sound doctrine, yet if they have not a mediate and ordinary call or sending, which though it be by man, yet is divine, as *Luther* saith *they cannot preach to your profit, they come not to edifie but to destroy.* They are *Luthers* words. Let no uncalled speaker, Beloved, have any encouragement at your hands, having no mission from God. Our Saviour tells you, that what shew soever they make of holiness, and spiritualness, and godliness, and saintship, and the like, yet they are wolves in sheep cloathing, thieves spoiling Gods heritage, deceitful workers, undermining the truth, therefore take heed of them, or forsaking the publique assemblies, to run after them to your perversion and destruction, such is the first requisite to a publique worship, the Ministers, the rightly called Ministers, presence in the Assembly.

2. That publique worship may be publique indeed, the people ought to come and joyn in it, every one that would be saved must be member of the true Church for *extra ecclesiam non est salus* out of the true Church and Religion, no man can find assurance of comfort

fort and Salvation. *Japhet* cannot be saved until perswaded to dwell in the tents of *Shem*, nor *Noahs* family but of the Ark. The visible Church of Christ is a Congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly administered according to all those things that are necessarily requisite for the same. A true Church is chiefly to be distinguished from a false by purity and soundnes of doctrine, and due administration of the Sacraments in it, And surely these are unquestionable in our Church of *England*, even in the confession of our adversaries, as it stands at this day reformed from the dreggs of Popery in its doctrine and worship. So then to this Church let every one joyn himself, and not seperate from it, if he would be saved (e) *The Lord added to the Church such as should be saved.*
Regia via. The King of heavens high way to Salvation is, by adding to the Church not by seperating from it. If God be our Father the Church is our Mother. (f) *Jerusalem which is above, is the mother of us all.* Hence the Church is oft called the Kingdome of heaven. (g) *And that promise that is made* (h) *the people that dwells there, shall have their sins forgiven,* is to be understood of the catholick Church, and so by consequence is applicable

^e*A&s 2.47.*

^f*Gal. 4. 26.*

^g*Mat. 13.*

^{44.}

^b*E&s. 33.*

^{24.}

pllicable to every particular visible Church that is a visible member of it. It is a damnable conceit of some, that a man may be saved in any religion. There is but one Faith,
Ephe. 4.5. (1) one Way, one gate to life (4) And Gods
Mat. 7.13. promise is to call his Elect, that he will
Jer. 32.39. give them one heart and one way. (1) O then
 it stands men instead to consider diligently, which is the true standing Religion, and the true Church and every one must wait upon the Assemblies in that Church, that publique worship may be joynly and publiquely offered unto God, all the people ought to come to the first part of worship, even the confession of sins; and to joyn therein, and in all the other parts of worship with the Minister, that they may be truly publique! Hence both the Jews and Gods People in all ages have understood themselves bound in all their Liturgick services to say *Amen* unanimously to the prayers and praises, they have put up to God. And we have cause to bless God that our publique worship in this nation is not (as the Papists would have it,) in a forreign language or strange tongue, but in our own tongue, intelligible to all, so that all the people may understandingly joyn in every part thereof and say *Amen*. Its a privilege this, other na-
 tions

nions want; O that we would prize and improve it. So that's the second requisite to make worship publique, the peoples joyning unanimously with the Minister in it. These two make up the assembly, they are the persons that are to assemble, but where? this brings in a third.

3. Requisite to make Gods worship truly publique even a place fit, and known, and set a part for that purpose. The assembling of our selves together must be in a publique place, God by his instituted Law, did particularize and set a part to his people some places for his publique worship, and service: Paradise it selfe was a place designed not onely for innocent *Adam* *terram* but *Deum colere*, not onely to till the ground shereof, but also to worship God in it. And the place were *Adam* and his family had their residence after they was driven out of Paradise, was another place for worship, which when *Cain* Left he departed from the face of God (m). And the Church of God being afterwards continued amongst the Patriarchs, they had their pericular places for worship also, though not so solemn but occasional places onely: because they was alwayes in a flitting and unconstant state, but after the Israelites came out of Egypt then was their places punctually determined by God himself, As.

I. The

*vide Dr. Ia.
Stillingsteens
Pbecinab.*

1. The Tabernacle where the Arke of the Covenant and the Altar was placed. There God promised to meet with his people, that worshipped him; hence it was called *the Tabernacle of the Congregation, or the Tabernacle of Meetings*, as being both the place of their meeting together and Gods meeting with them. (v) Now this place was fixed as

^{Exod. 29.} the place of Jewish meeting, as being a type
^{42. and 30.} of Christ our Mediator, by whom alone, we
^{36. and}

^{Num. 17. 4.} being strangers unto God, became acceptable to him; it is he that by offering himself a sacrifice to God for us, hath made him a propitious Father to us, and by whose intercession all our prayers, and service, and worship are accepted. So the Legal worship being to be performed on the altar and before the ark in the Tabernacle, it did typically teach that neither our persons, nor performances nor any worship we give God, would ever be acceptable to him, unless it be presented in and by Christ who was typed by them

2. God commanded the Temple to be built for his publique worship, not that God would dwell in houses made with hands (v), but thus by way of condescension, he accommodated himself to his peoples capacity. That as a sovereign Monarch or Prince makes choice of some great City for his residence, so did

did the Lord of *Jerusalem*, which is called therefore the City of the great King. And as a Prince hath his palace in a great City, so would the Lord have his Temple within *Jerusalem*, which is therefore called the place of his habitation (a), The throne of his glory (b), The perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth (c), The place of his rest (d). Now the reason why God would have the portable Tabernacle erected by *Moses* to be changed by *Solomon*, into a most magnificent and stately Temple to be fixed at *Jerusalem*, it was to typify the heavenly Temple and Sanctuary into which Christ was to enter after his passion and resurrection, where we shall all appear before him to adore God in perfect peace for ever more.

Then

3. There was also places for worship among the Jews besides not commanded but only approved by God, viz; Their Synagogues, and Proseucha's, and places of prayer: for though they were to have but one altar and place for sacrifice which the Lord should chuse to place the ark of his covenant there, the Tabernacle or Temple, yet had they other places for devotion and religious use. Their Synagogues was covered buildings, like our Churches, their Proseuchas were a

M

Plat

^a Ps. 76.2.

^b Je. 14.21.

^c La. 2. 15.

^d Ps. 132. 14.

plat of ground encompassed with a wall, or other inclosures like our Courts, open above, in these they pray'd onely, in these they interpreted the Scriptures also, in the Temple they both pray'd, and interpreted, and sacrificed also : The one was without the City (e). The other was within (f) Moses having in old time in every City them that preached him, being read in the Synagogues every Sabbath day: their Proseucha's or place of prayer Mr. Aede makes as Ancient as the times of Joshua (g). But as for their Synagogues many Authors will have their Original sett no higher then the Babylonish Captivity, thinking that necessity first taught the Jews the use of them, which after their return they brought with them into their own Country. But Aretius and Godwin do more probably conjecture that for as much as the Jews were peculiarly engaged to worship God, and that there was but one Temple for the whole Nation where all the Males only were bound to appear but thrice a year; and that an hundred miles distant from them that dwelt in remote places, therefore that they might not be left wholly destitute of places for their ordinary meeting for publique worship they built these Synagogues after they came into the promised

e Act 16.13
f Act 15.21.
g Vid Diam.
be on
Joth. 24.
25.

promised Land. Sure it is they were in David's time, whence that place (b) They have ^{b Ps. 74, 8.} burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the Land; and being called the Synagogues of God, we may gather thence that the Lord approved them, though he did not command them. So did our Saviour often frequenting them while he was in the flesh (i) both ^{i Lu. 4. 16.} evidently testifying his real likeing of those publique performances of religious worship that were then celebrated, and tacitely approved the places themselves, where they were thus solemnly performed, thus you see there were these ^{17. and 21.} several places for publique worship under the Law. But what shall we now think of the time of the Gospel? Indeed our Saviour Christ hath removed all distinction of places through legal holiness, yet hath he still made ample provision for the authority of places for solemn assemblies for publique worship.

I. The distinction of place through legal holiness is removed by Christ. The Tabernacle and Temple had a legal holiness and ceremonial Sanctity put upon them, because of the Arkes being there (k). There and only there they was to Sacrifice, without an extraordinary warrant to the contrary. As the Hebrews say a private Alter was not lawful to be erect-

ed, but by a Prophet; and when ever they prayed they was either to pray in the Tabernacle or Temple (*l*) or else towards the same (*m*),

Ex. 25. 14. *Ps. 99. 6.* but that was for the thing typified by them,

m 2 Cor. 6. even Christ, through whom God accepts

1 Kings 8. both of our persons and prayers, and all our

44 Dan. 6. 10. performances. It is in and through his Me-

diation onely that we call upon God. Therefore he the substance being come, the shadowes are vanished. There is now no

legal or ceremonial kind of holiness in any place however consecrated, to render any

duties there performed more acceptable un-

to God then if performed by the same per-

sons in like manner in any other places.

Divine worship under the Gospel is not

now tyed to any one place more than o-

ther, for any typical holiness in them. The

whole world is Gods universal, and as it were

Church Cathedral, and so as we may pray

n 1 Thes. 4. at all times (*n*). So in all places (*o*) and

17. 1 Tim. 5. 8. he can and will hear us from heaven his ha-

bitation, which is constantly alike distant

from us. That all distinction of places

through ceremonial holiness is abolished our

Saviour evidently teacheth in his discourse

with the woman of Samaria (*p*) she asked

Joh. 4. 22. him in what place God was to be worshiped, whe-

ther on Mount Gerizim, where the Samaritan

Temple

Temple was, or Mount Moriah whereon the Temple of Solomon was built: He answered her, *the hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem worship the Father,* that is the publique worship of God should not be restrained to any place for its ceremonial holiness, as if it could render the parts of Divine service more acceptable to God, than if performed else where, for the body of ceremonial worship was now to expire, and the partition wall to be taken down and God was to be worshipped no more with Jewish ceremonies: but the Gentiles was to be admitted to be his worshippers who together with the Jewes should worship him in spirit and truth, and this the Prophet Malachy foretold (q) from the rising of the Sun q Mal. i. 11.
to the going down of the Sam^r, saith the Lord, my name is great among the Gentiles and in every place incense shall be offered in my name, All this then shew^s the vanity of the Popish Pilgrimages to this or that place, as being more holy, or to pray before this or that Saint or Image, or relike, or tuteler God thereof. Since all such difference of place is abolished by Christ, So that wheresoever we be with *Jeremiah* in the Pit, or *Daniel* in the Lions denn, *Job* on the dung-hil, *Hesekiah* in his bed, the three Children in the

Furnace, *Jonah* in the Whales belly, with Christ in the Mountain, in the Desert, in the Garden, on the House top, or on the Sea shore, with *Paul* in the Prison: we may call upon God and he will hear us; thus on the one side we must hold this fast against the Papists, that all distinction of places is abolished. So that Christians may lawfully and acceptably worship God when and where their covenants direct them. Yet on the other hand be not deceived, as if there was no authority or excellency of some places for solemn Assemblies, for publick worship, still under the Gospel above others.

2. Though the ceremonial holiness, be extinct, yet are there some places holy, as separate, and dedicate from a common to holy uses, though our Temples be not, as the Temple of *Jerusalem* was, parts of our worship of God, nor tipes of Christ body, nor are we bound to set our faces towards them when we pray, yet is it written (v)
my house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations. The Saints meeting and Assembling there to pray, makes it be called the house of prayer, so the Assembly sanctifies the place, and not the place the Assembly, as the Temple did, seeing, as I said before
v Esa 56.2.

before we are body as well as spirit, therefore very light of Nature teacheth us, that convenient places for Assembling for publique worship, are necessary, and those places capacious for many, that must joyn therein. And although in case of Persecution of Religion the meanest place is acceptable; yet when God is pleased to give his Church Kings to be nursing fathers, to allow publique places consecrated for publique worship, with what thankfulness then should we repair to them, which many of our Christian Brethren in the world would purchase with their whole estates and dearest blood. When God gave rest and quietness to his Church from the ten famous Persecutions, wherein they were glad to Assemble not in the fittest but safest places, perhaps in Dens and Caves of the earth, I say, when God gave her rest from them, then did they immediately erect Oratories for publique prayers, not sumptuous and stately, which could not then be possible by reason of the Churches poverty, nor plausible in respect to the worlds envie: but after when God was pleased to convert Kings to the Faith then was Temples and Churches presently built: and in building them no cost was spared, and nothing counted to dear

that was spent about them, Sacrilegious wretches are not in these times more desirous to pull down, than those devout professors of Christianity was to set up Churches. Thus did popular consent and the Magistrates civil Sanction design these places for publique worship, seperating them unto it and prevailing custome hath styled them Churches. Nay so did S. Paul himself s. Cor 11. 18. 20. 22. and 34 compared. (s) what is it then but arrant madness and scotish Ignorance; in our Quakers to boast so much of the light within them, and yet to be in such darkness? Its contrary to the very light of nature, to decry and forsake the places set a part for religious worship, the necessity whereof for publique Assemblies is so evident even by natural light. How much better did the poor Heathens improve their natural dictates, than these pretenders to the light within, who from the sight of the necessity of some convenient place for publique worship invented their Groves, and Oratories, and Temples for the service of their Idol Gods, so then from all these considerations. Gods own setting a part places for publique Assemblies, under the law, and before it his approving those that his people did set a part, the authority that such places have by the very

very light of nature, as well as by Scripture, and the practice of the universal Church, though without placeing any ceremonial holiness in them. I conclude that Divine worship may be truly Publique which as publique is so acceptable unto God, there is requisite as publique persons Ministers and People to Assemble in it, so also a publique place consecrated for the same, from which excellent consideration ascend we to an higher, which is in the very Text.

Prop. 7. The most Solemn and publique Assemblies of the Church in these publique places, are greatly to be esteemed and constantly to be frequented of all the faithful members of the same, in the negative (*not forsaking*) must needs be implied the affirmative to frequent them. It is a truth this, evidently following from those I have delivered. For if God is to be worshipped by all rationall beings, and that must needs be in some place in respect of our bodily parts, and that more publique it is done the better it is, and that it be publiquely done it is necessary there be an Assembly of Minister and People, Pastor and Flock in a publique place, then is it evidently necessary that such assemblies be frequented by all, in order to the discharge of this debt

debt of nature, the worship of God. Indeed to this we are obliged.

I. By selfe interest, because of the great blessing we may justly look for from God, upon his Ordinances in the publique assemblies, and that more than in any private meetings whatsoever; for to the Church assemblies is that rightly applyed (t), the Lord loves the gates of Zion above all the habitations of Jacob (v). That special part

^{t Pla. 87.2.} ^{u Mat. 7.7.} of divine worship Prayer, is compared to seeking a thing lost, and knocking at a gate

^{The whole duty of man} we desire to enter into, and sure when ma-

ny seek a thing together there is more hope of their finding it; when many knock together at heaven-gates they will be sooner heard. Hence Gods people to shew an extraordinary desire to prevail with God in their prayers upon extraordinary occasions, they was wont to be extraordinary careful, that their Assemblies might be as pub-

lique as might be (w). Blow the trumpet in

^{w Joel. 2.15.} Zion sanctifie a Fast call a solemn Assembly (x),

^{x verse. 16.} Gather the people, Assemble the children. As if he should say leave none out. So Jehosha-

pah (y) Proclaimed a Fast throughout all

^{y 2 Chr. 20.3.} Judah (z). all Judah stood before the Lord

^{z verse. 13.} with their young ones, wives, and children, and

^{a Ju. 20.26.} (a) all the children of Israel went up and all the

the People came into the house of God, when they were to fight with Benjamin and then they prevailed. For this cause also was Hezekiah so careful together so solemn an assembly to keep the Pasleover (b)

2. It's as necessary, this, for others good, for every man, especially Parents and Masters, frequenting the publique Assemblies, may do much good by their example. David was much comforted in seeing the peoples forwardness in going to Gods house. (c) Multitudes doubtless go astray and forsake the holy Assemblies, by seeing others of better rank and quality doing so before them: and on the contrary many would keep close unto them, if the better sort would but more conscionably frequent them. Hence Solomon made his Scaffold in the Temple; even in the midst of the Court, even that all the people might see him (d), and of King Josiah it is said, when Athalia came into the Temple he stood by the Pillar as the manner was (e). So it is said of Josiah also (f); and therefore God did require that the Prince should not onely joyn with the people in publique worship, and come in, when they come in, and go out, when they go out, but also should be in the midst of them, that they might all see him, and so take good example

c Ps. 132. 1.

d 2 Chr. 28. 13.

e 2 Kings 23. 24.

f 2 Kings 23. 2.

example by him. And as to give good example to others, so that we our selves may partake of the fellowship and presence of Gods people that assemble there. For as every godly man loveth all such as fear God (g), and delighteth in their Company, (h) *I am a companion to all them that fear thee and keep thy Commandement,*) So doth he take most comfort in their company when they meet together in their assemblies to serve God. In the life to come, it shall be a great part of our happiness to meet together with all the faithful, and to stand in the assemblies of the righteous, as may ap-

i 2 Thes. 2.1. pear by that observation of the Appostle (i). *we beseech you brethren by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.* And by the Prophets speech (k) *sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous.* And now we have

k Psal. 1.5. some resemblance and foretaste of that comfort in our meeting together with Gods people in the Church assemblies here. For by their presents and fellowship, Gods grace is both confirmed and nourished, and increased in us (l), as Iron sharpeneth Iron, so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend, hence when the Brethren met Paul at *Apii Forum*, he praised God and took courage

l Pr. 27.17.

rage

e Ps. 15. 4.

b Psal. 119.

36.

ex-
age. It revived his spirit to meet with
them (m), so in respect of the example we ^{in Acts. 28.} may
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we to give others, and that sweetness of ^{15.} having fellowship with Gods people, we have cause to esteem highly and frequent the Assemblies of the Church.

3. That tenderness that is due to Gods honour and glory obligeth every conscientiable Christian hereunto : as well as his care to give good example, and own his benefit. For the more publique the assembly is wherein we worship and the better it is frequented, the more is God glorifyed before all the world. And the more solemn is the profession which we make of that duty and homage which we owe unto him : upon this account it is required of great ones (n) to ^{n Ps 19.12.} worship the Lord in the Sanctuary, that so they might give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. Hence David vowed, he would ^{Ps. 35.18.} give thanks unto the Lord in the great congre-
gation, and praise him among much people. And Hezekiah resolved to go up to the house of the Lord the third day, so soon as ever he was recovered. (o) Indeed we cannot ^{o2 Kin. 20.8.} better profess our religion, and homage and obedience unto God, our love and thankfulness unto him for all his mercies, than by diligent frequenting the most solemn Assemblies

Assemblies of his Church; hence the Professors of the true religion are expressed by these two things, (p) ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my Sanctuary. Nay I add

4. To frequent them is not onely our duty but priviledge also, it is one of the greatest mercies we enjoy on earth that we can have liberty to go to the house of God publicquely to Assemble in them to worship him there, and should we not then chearfully frequent them? There was nothing I am sure that David desired more in the time of his banishment, than this liberty, and nothing in which he rejoiced more, when he had it (q) unicum one thing, only one thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I shall require, even that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to visit his holy Temple.

(r) As the Hart panteth for the rivers of water, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, even for the living God, when shall I come and appear before the presence of God! and verse 4. He saith that his soul languished when he considered, that had it not been for the tyranny of his enemies he might have gone with the rest of the assembly into the house of God; and (s) in a kind of abrupt affection he breaks out, O Lord of hosts how agreeable

¶ Ps. 84.1,

the

• ate

are thy Tabernacles, my soul languisheth, yea, and fainteth that I might come into the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cryes out for the living God, and verſe the third he seems to envy the Sparrowes and Swallowes, that had liberty to lay their young where he had no access; and then he cryes out abruptly with a wonderful pathetical exclamation, O thine altars Jehovah, my King and my God, And in the three next verſes he pronouneeth them happy? not onely that dwells in the Lords house to praise him, but that hath but liberty to come to the Church, though it were with a long and tedious journey, through thick and thin, through the Valley of Baca the rain filling the pools. Yea, he prefers a day spent in Gods house before a thousand elsewhere, and the meanest room and most contemptible office, a door keepers place, before the highest in the tents of wickednes. David was deeply sensible, you see, how great a priviledge the liberty of Gods house is. And it is observable to the same purpose, when Hezekiah upon his prayer had his sentence of death revoked, in what terms Gods goodness is declared, behold I have healed thee, and the third day thou shall go up to the house of the Lord (^t) intimating how special a favour it was that he should have

^{20. 5.} 2 Kings.

health

health and strength, so shortly to go to the worship of God, in the house of God: yea, the Scriptures plainly teacheth us, that though God be every where present (*u*) do not I fill hea-

u *Jer. 23. 24* *v* *en and earth saith the Lord, the most high dwelleth not in Temples made with hands, he is not*

largely de-monstrated in Dr Stillingfleet's *x* *confined in them* (*x*): yet, is he in special sort

in the congregation and Assemblies of his people. And sure that shewes it a great

Sherinah *priviledge to be in Gods presence, as the Queen of Sheba thought Solomon's servants*

happy that stood before him. Now Gods publique worship is called the face and pre-

*sence of God. (*y*) Hence when Cain was for-*

y *Pf. 105. 4.* *and 42. 25* *his murder banished from the place where his Parents and their families met together for*

z Gen. 4. 14. *the worship of God, as Piscator interprets the place (*z*) It is said he went out from the*

presence of God. And David desired to behold

in the house of the Lord, the beauty of the Lord (*a*), and he said, we will wait for thy loving

kindness, O Lord in the midst of thy Temple (*b*) (*c*) And the place of Gods worship under

c Pf. 26. 2. *the Law was called Bethel, Gods house, and the gloriuous Sanctuary* (*c*), because the glory

d Ex 40. 34 *e 1 Kings. 8.* *of the Lord filled it and sensibly appeared in it, in the Tabernacle* (*d*) *and in the Temple,*

f Pf. 26. 8. *and Zion is called the habitation of Gods house; and the place where his honour dwelleth*

And Gods presence is no less in our Christian assemblies, for so runs the promise, (a) where two or three are met together in my name ^{a Mat. 18.} here am I in the midst of them. Hence S. John saw him walking in the midst of the seven golden Candlesticks (b). And the assemblies of Gods people under the Gospel may as well be called glorious, because the glory of the Lord appears in them also, though not so sensibly, yet no less comfortably and effectually, as is plain by that comparison the Apostle makes, between the ministry & worship of God that was under the Law; and this that is under the Gospels preferring this for glory and excellency far above the other (c). yea, and as effects of this presence of God, O consider, what benefits are enjoyed in these assemblies, even matters of that worth that the very Angels themselves desired to stoop down to behold (d), that most comfortable and precious treasure of Gods holy word, the ministry of reconciliation, (e) the preaching ^{e 2 Cor. 5.} of the word, which is the door of Faith, (f) that ordinance of God by which his Saints are gathered, and the body of Christ edified; (g) that powerful means by which Satan is made to fall from heaven like lightning (h), and his strongest holds are beaten down in us (i), that key of knowledge (k) ^{i Cor. 10.} ^{j Acts 20.} by.

N

by which is opened unto us the whole coun-
sel of God (*l*), Those Sacraments which
are seals of the righteousness which is by

*Rom. 4:11.**II.*

Psal. 65:2. Faith (*m*), those Monuments of Gods ex-
ceeding love unto us in Jesus Christ,
those seals of the kingdom, those feasts
for our souls of fat things full of marrow,
those exercises of common prayer and
praising God in their proper places, that
house of prayer, praise, waiting for God

Heb. 11:14. in *Sion*. (*n*) O what privileges are these!

inestimable unutterable; had I the tongue of
men and Angels I could not set it out suf-
ficiently. Such cause have we to love Gods
house, and to frequent and highly to e-
steeem the assemblies of the Saints in it and
we are sensual, Sottish, Foolish, above mea-
sure, if we do not frequent and esteem
them. Nay as there is a special promise
of Gods presence in such publick assem-
blies so of Gods special protection of them,
of which the Angels are special ministers.

Ex. 34:7. For as they have a charge from God to mi-
nister and do service to Gods people (*o*)
and to pitch their tents about them when
they assemble to serve the Lord. Hence*Ex. 25:1.*

under the Law, the Curtains that the Ta-
bernacles were made of was full of cher-
ubims (*p*) with the figures of them; the
walls of Solomons Temple were carved
round

round about. q, both which typified the presence & attendance of the holy Angels upon the whole Church & Body of Gods people, as at all other times and in all other places, so especially at their Church assemblies; but see a full promise of protection to them, (i) read it. Hence David gives this for one reason (f) why he, so highly esteemed Gods tabernacles, for faith he, the Lord is a Sun and a Shield unto us, and (c) in time of trouble he will hide us in his Pavilion, and in this respect they that are excluded from the Church assemblies are said to be delivered up to Satan, unto his power and will, and men plac't under Gods, protection no longer. Therefore it concerns us to frequent the publick assemblies of Gods people, both out of self love, and for the good we may reap by others fellowship, and for others good, and for Gods glory, and for the excellency of the privileges in having liberty of Gods house, we have all the reason in the World, to frequent, and highly to esteem them above any private meetings, that seek to overturn them, or our estimation of them. Now from all that hath been said there naturally issueth an.

Eighth Proposition which is in Prep. 8.

N 2

the

the very letter of my text, That it is a very sinful thing in any member of a true Church to separate from , and forsake those holy and publick Assemblies , *not forsaking the Assembling of your selves together, as the manner of some is.* That it is sinful appears sufficiently by what is said, as it is a meanes of making the worship of God less acceptable, of giveing evilexamples to others , of abateing of Gods Glory, of despight or contemning so excellent a priviledge, of depriving your own soules of the fruition of Gods presence , and of so great blessings flowing from it , the word rightly taught , the Sacrament purely administrated , which should nourish and refresh your soules , and strengthen your faith, and confirm your assurance of Gods love in Christ. The Churches prayers and so of that blessing which our joyned prayers might bring down with a full measure upon us. Of the praises thereof, and so that chearfulness and reviving of spirit which we might enjoy, by having fellowship in those spiritual songs where Gods people do sing of his righteousness of all these benefits men wilfully deprive themselves, that forsake the Assembling together in Gods house. And how-

however some men may foolishly imagine, that they can do well enough with the private use of the words though they enjoy not the publick, and can pray well enough by themselves though they have no society with the general and publick devotions. Yet is it sure on the contrary, that there is no such promise made to the private as to the publick. Nay, none at all to the private if the publick be neglected, or contemned. Such a woeful thing it is, for men to do themselves the greatest injury that can be, to deprive themselves of Gods presence by forsaking the assemblies of his people; upon this ground Gods people complained of the effect of the rage and fury of their enemies; (*t*) ^{PSAL. 45. 21} They razed the sanctuary to the ground, defiled the dwelling place of Gods name, and burnt up all the Synagogues of God in the land, And Jeremiah in his Lamentations (*u*) The waies of Zion lament, because no man cometh to the solemn feasts, all her gates are desolate. And hence the sentence of excommunication hath ever by religious soules been accounted, the greatest of punishments, as casting them out of Gods presence and giving them up to Satan (*x*) so sottrish are they that willfully excommunicate themselves by forsaking the assemblies. It is like ^{a LAM. 1. 4} ^{#2 COR. 5. 8}

a mans being outlawed in matters of civil Government, by which he is deprived of all the benefits and protection, belonging to a subject of the realm. Just so doth this censure put them out of the privileges of Christians and out of Gods protection for a time, so as to be reckoned as strangers or foreigners, as heathens and publicans.

^{16.} Matt. ^{10.} ^{17.} (y) The sin of these men will best be discovered if we pass from this eighth proposition to the second General in the Text.

2. The Apostles taxation of some for this sin of forsaking the Assemblies, and so putting themselves in a way of apostacy, or falling back from, or wavering in the profession of the true faith; for so the Text runs, *not forsaking the Assembling your selves together as the manner of some is.* So then in the Apostles judgment those some; who ever they be, are blame worthy, and are to be reproofed, and sharply rebuked what motives soever they may have for forsaking the publick Assemblies of the true Church, they cannot forsake them and be innocent, it is an act that cannot be acceptable unto God, *not forsaking the Assembling of your selves together, as the manner of some is.* As there are diverse persons that forsake the assemblies: So are their motives to forsake them different, some give one account thereof, and some another.

K

ther all blame worthy. Let us but consider and weigh the Apollogies and motives of some of them.

¶ 1. The manner of some is to forsake the assemblies upon pretence of some corruptions in them. It is holyness and purity these men pretend to in a high measure, and therefore they forsake our assemblies, because as they affirm, they are unholy, being mixt assemblies, consisting of both good and bad, (a) a miscellany, Multitudes, of the seed of woman, and of the Serpent, and much more they inveigh and rail bitterly against them, and thence inferr a necessity of separation from them; (z) but that this is a most corrupt, and unsound inference will appear if we consider.

¶ 2. That the purest Church on earth is not free; perfectly free from all corruptions: The spouse of Christ is comly yet black. It becomes Christs Church to be as true, so humble, far from arrogating perfection. For any Church on this side heaven to say that she is absolute, and neither wants nor abounds, were the voice of Laodicea; or Tyrus in the Prophet. As there is no Element which is not through many mixtures departed from its first

*a vide Ro-
binson
and Gandy
books.*

*¶ Heb. 12.
14.*

simplicity, so is there no Church that breathed in so pure an air, but it may justly complain of some thick and unwholesome evaporation, of sin and error in it. Was not the Church typed by Noah's Ark: wherein was unclean as well as clean beasts? doth not Christ compare it to a feild wherein grows both tares and wheat promiscuously until the harvest; (a) to a great house wherein are vessels of Gold and Silver, and of Brasse earth and clay; (b) to a sheep fould wherin are souled both sheep and Goats; (c) to a company of Virgins all invited by an external call to the Wedding, whereof some were foolish, some wise; (d) to an orchard or vineyard; (e) wherein all are not fruitful trees that bring forth their fruit in due season. But on some God bestowes digging, and dunging unto them, and fencing them, which cumber the ground and are good for nothing but to be cast into the fire. To a vine in which are some branches that onely bear leaves of profelion, or at the best but sowre grapes. Nay, sometimes in a true Church, even the chiefest members for minency and Authority are corrupted, sometimes the prime Governours of a Church as the chief Priests and Elders in our Savi-

Mat. 13.

12.

b 2 Tim. 2.

c Matt. 25.

d Mar. 25.

e Esai 61.1.

Saviours time) may be great enemies of real goodness. Nay, to come closer to our selves, 2. We must acknowledge that even in our Church, and the Assemblies thereof there is such general decay of that first love, and primitive piety which consisted chiefly in Humility, Mortification, Obedience, and good works, and such a general increase of all filthy and abominable sins, and those too frequently uncensured, unreproved that there is just cause for any Godly man to fear least God be about to take away his tabernacle from amongst us, and remove our candlestick, and go far off from our sanctuary, (f)

Ezek. 8.6.

3. It is undoubted that when a pious Christian considers these things he ought to be deeply affected with them, and neither communicate with a whole Church in any corruptions, that are evident corruptions in it, nor yet partake in the sins of any the particular members thereof: but observing his brothers propinquity, his duty is to admonish him, and to bewail his sin, and do what lies in him to bring him to a reformation thereof. This is the right course, but

4. This is no ground at all for him to separate from the Church, or to forsake the

the Assembly there of (it is of Mr. Hildesham's Doctrines, agreeable to the nineteenth Article of the Church of England) and that those Assemblies that enjoy the word and Doctrine of Salvation though they may have many corruptions remaining in them, yet they are to be acknowledged true Churches of God, and such as none of the faithful may make separation from, because, - 1. There was never Church on earth free from corruption, either in the whole or in its particular assemblies, and yet never did the Saints of God forsake them, upon that account. Never was there Church from the beginning of the world, to this day, from one side of the Earth to another, pure in all her members. Adams house that as the first Church on earth, yet did it contain Cain a bloody murderer, as well as Abel a devout worshiper in it. Presently after did God raise up Seth instead of Abel, to be a holy seed unto him, and even then did not the Church continue long free from prophane mixtures, but the sons of God became enamoured with the beauty, and matched with the daughters of men. And so the deluge came upon them. Now from the deluge God preserved Noah in the Ark; there was the Church again, and

and behold, in that ark there was accursed *Cham* as well as a blessed *Shem*. As also in *Abrahams* family, a scoffing *Ismael* as well as a devout *Isaac*. And in *Isaacs* a prophane *Esaū* as well as an holy *Jacob*; And O what Scandals brook out among the Patriarchs! *Ruben* became incestuous. *Si-meon* and *Levi* brethren in evil. After this, when the Church was inlarged into great congregations, and assemblies, O what impatient murmuring do we read of among the children of *Israel*, what foul Idolatries committed in the Wilderness, what serving of *Baalim* time after time in the Land of *Canaan*, what horrible and scandalous sins were committed amongst them under the Judges? how was polygamy and unreasonable divorces, and setting up high places in the daies of the best Kings? and what a deluge of prophaneness and Idolatry must you needs think there brake out in the worst, when men did not onely sin secretly but openly? they shewed their sin as *Sodom*; when the Priests that should have restrained them, led them on by evil examples; when the more holy were as signes and proverbs of reproach, and yet in all these successive generations, we do not read of any se-
pera-

perations from, or forsaking the Church assemblies, as the manner of some now is. Its true in Idolatrous times the Saints did refuse to joyne with the ungodly in Idolatrous worship. So in *Ahab's* time there were seven thousand that had not bowed their knee to *Baal* but yet never was the wicked (until convicted and censur-ed) debarred from joyning with the Godly in the true worship, nor was the Godly ever enjoyned to separate from them for fear of defilement by them. Nay, on the contrary we shall find that when our Sa-viour was born, then was the Church so corrupted that the Temple was become a den of thieves, and yet then *Joseph* and *Mary* the parents of Christ did joyn themselves to the congregation in Gods publick worship? Nay they went a long journey with their child Jesus to satisfie the law to offer their turtle Doves and a pair of young Pigeons, and to take part with the Priests and Gods people in that which was good and for the rest they med-dled no further then their places required, an Example Saith *Calvin* and *Marlorat* ex-press against our Brownists, and all our Se-paratists, and Recusants, and that which may justly and finally stop their mouths
for

for ever might be this? if they would but consider how corrupt was the State of the Church in our Saviour's time, and yet how far forth our Saviour did communicate with them in the service of God not forsaking the assemblies of the Church, though then so corrupt.

1. For the Priests and Teachers they ^{g Matt. 23.}
_{16.} were ignorant and unlearned; (g) Nay, ^{verse 3.}
 wicked and ungodly (h) even the High ^{b John 11.}
_{44.} priest himself did enter unlawfully into
 his calling, for whereas by Gods ordi-
 nance he was to hold that once during
 his life, it was bought and sold and made
 annual, which is imply'd in that exhorta- ^{i Luke 4.}
_{on (i) Caiaphas was high priest for that year. 28, 29.}

2. Most of the people in most of the places, where our Saviour conversed were notoriously and obstinately wicked. He lived most in Nazareth and see what they were there; (k) All that were in ^{k Matt. 11.}
_{20, 21.} the Synagogue were fill'd with wrath, and rose up and thrust him out of the City, and led him to the edge of a hill to thrust him down headlong, yea and all the Cities where most of his great works had been done he upbraided, *wo to thee Corazin, wo to thee Bethsaida,* (l) nor were the people of Je-
 susalem better. For when *Piat* a Gentile
 of.

offered to release him, all the multitude crying out at once, not him but Barabas;

^mLuk. 23. now Barabas was a robber (*m*). And
18.

when Pilat washed his hands protesting for Christ's innocence, they all said desperately *his blood be upon us and our children* (*n*), And for the worship it self,

ⁿMat. 27. ^oMark. 7. 21. ^pJoh. 9. 22. ^qLuk. 2 21. ^rLuk. 2 21.

that was used in our Saviour's time, it was very corrupt.

1. They then urged the use of many superstitious ceremonies, more strictly than the commandments and ordinances of God (*o*).

2. They profaned the Temple and made it a den of thieves.

3. They abused the Discipline and censures of the Church shamefully, (*p*) the Jewes decreed that if any one confessed that Jesus was the Christ, he should be excommunicated *ipso facto*.

4. Their doctrine was corrupted in many points as these of divorce, of theft, Murder, adultery (*q*). So corrupt was the Church then; and yet mark, our Saviour did not separate from it, but communicated with the publick assemblies in the worship of God.

1. When an infant he was circumcised, and by that Sacrament incorporated into that Church (*r*).

2. When

2. When his mother was purified, he was brought to the Temple, and presented to the Lord with his offering as ^{Luk.2.22,} the custome was, (s).

3. He often heard such teachers, as taught in the Church (t).

4. He was wont every Sabbath to joyn in publick prayer, with the Congregati-^{Luk.2.46.}
on that were at Nazareth (u). ^{Luk.4.16.}

5. He received the Sacrament of Bap-
tism in a congregation of that people.

(x) When all the people were Baptized ^{Luk.3.2.} he was baptized also.

6. He communicated in the passover with the people, and the Priest (y). ^{Joh.2.13.}

7. He allowed his Disciples to hear those teachers. (z) Nay, he commanded ^{Mat.23.} the Leper whom he cleansed to go and shew himself to the Priest, and offer his gift in the Temple. (a) Neither did any ^{Mat. 2.} of the Saints in any Age, nor Christ himself, nor his Disciples separate from, nor forsake the publick assemblies of the true Church, that enjoyed the word and doctrine of Salvation for any corruptions in them. Then these instances what can be said more convincing, if men had ears to hear, what the spirit hath recorded of the Churches. The fore quoted Mr.

Hilderfham

Hilderham upon this point, hath two other reasons why we may not forsake them for their corruptions, who because he is of much authority with many dissenters, and I wish they were all of his sober spirit, therefore I will offer them to your consideration. *Valeant quantum valeat possent.* Indeed there is no cause to forsake them for their corruptions, because,

2. Notwithstanding such corruptions yet so long as God continues his word and doctrine of Salvation to a people, and in their assemblies, it is evident he dwells among them, and hath not forsaken them should men make themselves wiser or purer than God himself, to forsake those assemblies which God hath not forsaken till God hath forsaken a Church sure no man may forsake it. So shall any man pretend to be holier and to hate corruptions more than the Lord, the holy one of Israel? Now you may see Gods promise to dwell among and not forsake his Church, where the word and true worship of God continueth, (c) *I will set my tabernacle among you* (that is my Solemn-worship whereof the tabernacle was a principal part) *and my soul shall not abhor you, and I will walk among you, and I will be your God and*

*c Leu 26.
vii. 12.*

and you shall be my people. In Judah is God known, his Name is great in Israel (a). <sup>a Psal. 76.
12.</sup> in Salem is his Tabernacle and his dwelling place in Sion.

But may not this Church (may some say) be guilty of such sins and corruptions as deserve that God should forsake it, and for which God in his word hath threatened that he will forsake it, although he hath hitherto dwelt therein.

Object.

True, but that is no sufficient warrant for any to separate from it, till it undoubtedly appear that God hath indeed forsaken it, and put in execution what he hath justly threatened against it. Though adultery (either in Man or Wife) give just cause of separation, the bond of wedlock being broken by it, yet till a Bill of divorceement do pass between them, they remain still Man and Wife notwithstanding that sin. So that the woman, whom her Husband had wronged, is called his Wife. (b) Esau had justly deserved to lose the prerogative of his birth right, and superiority over his Brother, when he had despised and sold it (c), and God had by his decree said of them, *the elder shall serve the younger.* (d) And Saul deserved to be deprived of his Kingdom. <sup>b Mat. 2. 25.
c Gen. 25.
d Gen. 25.
23.</sup>

O

yed,

yea, God had said that he had rejected him.
 e 1 Sam. 13. 14, and 15. (c) yet till God saw it good to put his decree and oracle in execution, and actually to depose the one from his birth right, and the other from his Kingdome, Jacob acknowledged Esau his Lord and Superior (f), and David, Saul (g): So though a Church may be unworthy before God of the name of Christ's Church, for the many corruptions that are in it, and the Lord's threatenings are gone out against it, yet till God put this threat in execution, and actually take away his Tabernacle and worship from it, it is still to be acknowledged and reverenced as the Church of Christ, and not to be forsaken by the members thereof.

3. Who is it that dare forsake and separate from these assemblies; where men may be assured to find and attain to salvation; *Lord to whom shall we go, thou hast the words of eternal life.* Accounting this a sufficient reason why they might not leave him (h), but men may be sure to find and attain to salvation in such assemblies, where the ministry of the word and the Doctrine of Salvation is continued and purely delivered. For the word and Doctrine of Christ is called salvation (i). It is the ordinary

diary means appointed by God to bring men to salvation. (k) It is the incorruptible seed, at one time or other effectual in all Gods Elect that do enjoy it, (l) it is the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls. (Thus far Mr. Hildersham.) All the enemies of our Church cannot deny, but that both many have been and are still saved in the bosom thereof. Nor can the malice of those *Chams* that desire to espy the nakedness of their Mother, and glories to discover them, shew one fundamental error with us, not one Heresie whatsoever, how dare they then forsake our assemblies as their manner is? What though some others of your fellow members be guilty of sins and errors, is that any prejudice to your salvation, if you partake not with them, but rather reprove them, and preserve the true Faith and religion inviolate in your selves, although they by walking unworthy of their callings, and neglecting the conditions of the promises, do forfeit their part in the blessed privileges thereof, and the things promised. Yet shall the promises be made good to you, if you be found members of the Church. Nor shall it prove any prejudice to your salvation, that you are mixed with the wicked

in it : if you be not partakers of their sins. (n) *The wheat shall be gathered into the Lord's garner, and the chaff shall be cast into the fire.* Hence the Apostle, (o) What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the Faith of God of no effect, since it cannot and therefore being there is no Church on earth free from all corruptions; no not in its Chiefest members; being that Saints in their severall ages did not forsake the Church because of corruptions in them, being our Saviour hath left us his own practice for an incomparable example, being God himself forsakes not such Churches, and Salvation may be had in them, and the prophaneness of the ungodly is no prejudice to the salvation of the godly members of the Church. Then surely it is a sin in separating from our Church assemblies upon the pretence of some Corruptions in them, who, however they usurp the Title of Saints and Godly, and Puritans, and Christ Kingdome, and Spiritual, and the like, yet *Jude* (p) marketh them with a black coal, *These be they who separate themselves from him, sensual butting not the Spirit.* Our Christian duty is to mourn for, and weep for the like unto what evil we see in the church

Church or in our fellow members, so did the Faithful before the captivity; (q) q Ezek 9.4, so did Christ (r) We must wait upon God r Luke 19. who will in his due time cast his gold into the furnace, and purifie it seven times, will file off the rust and come with his fan in his hand, and separate the wheat from the tares at the day of particular and general judgment. ^{Ad 2d 3} * Aug. con. nendis sunt p[er]it ut arripiant quod possunt, quod tra[ns]portent non possunt patienter ferant, ut cum dilectione lib. 3.

& gemit & lugeant donec autem mendet Deus
& corrigat, aut in melle eradicet. Rizanio &
pacem ventilis. But we may not separate
our selves from or forsake the assemblies
thereof, on this pretence, as the
manner of some is,

2. The manner of some is to forsake
our assemblies upon pretence they dislike
the Pastors and Ministers thereof. Some
this or other is a miss in their own minister,
and therefore they care not for hearing
them; having itching ears, they hunt out,
or up heap teachets to themselves. To these
men I shall first offer two or three things
that directly tend to their better informa-
tion, concerning their Obligation to their
own Pastor, and then I shall answer their
complaints of him: and shew how ground-
less their forsaking the solemn assemblies

is in this respect. The notes I shall give tending directly to your better information are Mr. Hildersham's again, who I believe gives in them the sense of all the old Nonconformists in this point, and if they be well weighed, I do believe they startle those of the Presbyterian persuasion, that separate themselves from our Church, or set up private meetings in time of publick worship, and consequently in opposition to it. They are these.

1. Doubtless it is God's own ordinance that every Pastor should have his own flock to attend upon and labour amongst them, for so it is written (ſ) the Apostles ordained Elders in every congregation, ſo speaks S. Paul to Titus (v) for this cause left I thee in Creet that thou ſhouldest ordain Elders in every City, as I had appointed thee.

2. By necessary conſequence from the former, it muſt needs be alike the ordinance of God, that every one of God's people ſhould have a Pastor of his own to depend upon, & attend unto. For the duty of Pastor and People is relative and mutual, if the one be obliged by God's ordinance to attend to a particular people, then is that particular people obliged, by the ſame ordinance to attend to their particular Pastor. He may discharge this

Acts 14.
23.

Titus 2.
5.

this duty indeed, though they be so head strong as not to submit to his ministry, though they will not hear, or be warned by him as their watchman, yet may he, by a Faithful fulfilling the work that he hath received of the Lord, deliver his own soul: but then all this while, they by their own perverseness may lose the benefit of his ministry, and by forsaking him deprive themselves of those holy warnings, and instructions, which he, from the Lord, prepareth for them, as the straying sheep doth of that inspection, and provision which his careful shepherd would have over it, had it continued in its just bounds, so that it is every ones duty by the ordinance of God, to expect the Law at his own Pastors mouth, To depend upon his ministry, and hear what the Lord shall speak to him. Yea, he is obliged to this even in order to his own benefit.

3. It is Gods ordinance also, (because requisite by good order in the Churches, which is Gods ordinance) that Christians should be distinguished & sorted into congregations, according to their dwellings that they that dwell next together should be of the same congregation, and assembly. The general equity of these rules shewes that it is Gods ordinance.

^{w 1 Cor. 14.} God is not the Author of confusion but of peace, 33, and 40. as in all the Churches of the Saints. And let all things be done decently and in order; the word *Parochia*, signifying parish doth evidently in its Element, denote a compass or circuit of Inhabitants dwelling next together, and so belonging to the same Congregation, this as it evidently took place for order sake amongst the Jewes, Moses being read to every particular Congregation, in their particular Synagogues in every Church, every Sabbath day. ^{Acts}

^{15.21.} So for the same same good Orders sake, which was the undoubted ordinance of God, the same is still on force under the Gospel. For St. Paul left *Titus* in Crete to ordain Elders in every City. So that they that lived together in the same town, was apparently to be under the charge

^{x Titus 15.} of the same Pastor, and Elder. (^x) Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the o-

^{y 1 Pet. 5.2.} versight thereof not by constraint, &c. (^y) *Strikingfleets Irenicum*

4. Our Author while he with other mode-

^{353. & Alii.} rate Dissenters, from the Church, have in

some respects allowed mens leaving their own Pastors, to hear others better pleasing to them, yet have they so far acknowledged the evidence of the truth of these particulars shewing peoples obligation to

their

their own Pastors, that they taught it thus. That men might not ordinarily or usually leave them, and when they leave them they must carefully approve their hearts to God, that they have no other ends in so doing, but their own sound edification onely, and that they go to another Pastor onely because they find they can profit more in knowldg or Faith, or Sanctification, than by their own, they complain that many Christians make choice of, and applaud, and admire some particular teachers without any judgment or discretion. That some admire another Pastor rather then their own, because he makes more ostentation of eloquence, or reading, or learning, or such like humane glfs. As the Corinthians did, preferring other teachers before St. Paul himself, because he was rude in speech. (2) 2 Cor. 11. 5,6.
And some onely leave their own Pastors to go to others for variety sake, they have itching ears, and so must have a heap of teachers (4), one teacher (let him have never such excellent gifts) cannot please them long. And some prefers others before their own Pastors, onely because they shew more seeming zeal in their voice, and gesture, and Phrase of speech, and manner of delivery, though perhaps their teaching be

be nothing so powerful, wholesome or fit to edifie their consciences, as is the Doctrine of their own Pastor. These and other particulars they complain of which shewes that people are fickle and giddy headed and leave their own Pastors for want of knowledge and judgment. So that whoever they be that leave them, must be sure to approve themselves to that God that searcheth the heart, that they do it not for any other end or upon any other account, but for better edification. Nay the Authors urge, that when a man leaves his own Pastor go to another, though he doth it in uprightness of heart, only in a desire to edifie himself, yet must he seek to do it with his own Pastors good leave and consent, & why? It is his unquestioned duty to acknowledge that by the ordinance of God he owes duty to him as to his superior in things belonging to the soul. (b) Know them that labpur among you, and are overseers in the Lord and admonish you: and esteem them very highly in love for their work sake. Nay, he is bound to seek his Pastors comfort and give him all good encouragement, that he may do the work of his ministry with joy & cheer. ^c Heb.13.17 fulnes according to the Apostles rule. Obey them that have the rule over you and submit your

your selves, for they watch for your souls, as
they that must give an account, that they may
do it with joy & not with grief for that is un-
profitable for you. See here what one of the best
presbyterian Guides that ever this Church
had, delivereth as sound Doctrine; & oppose
these particulars to Mr. Baxters late answer
of Toleration not to abused: a book wherein
are many strange & ill digested conceits in
my poor judgment, and the pretences of
other Setters up of private assemblies: and
see if they can have consistence and agree-
ment: and observe that while this Pions
Author allows mens going to another Pa-
stor than their own for better edification,
yet doth he evidently understand the sculed
Pastor of a neighbour Church, which makes
the case quite different from mens present
forsaking their own Pastors, to hear unset-
tled, intruding preachers, who whether
they be lawfully called to that holy func-
tion, I am confident thousands are utterly
ignorant, nor have any good grounds to
think it. So that for as much as even these
sober dissenters, which did plead for, or at
all allowed mens ordinary leaving their
own Pastors, to go to another, have yet al-
lowed it with such cautions as these, that
men must do it for no by end, but for their
careful

better edification onely and must be very careful it be not for want of judgment in their choice, and it must be with their own Pastors consent, and as acknowledging his superiority, over them, and their obligation unto him, and as seeking his joy, and comfort, and encouragement, and for as much as this their allowance, was only with relation to settled Pastors ; and if a man should not, but with such caution leave the Pastor of his own Church, to hear the Pastor of another Churh, much less may he to hear an unknown, novel, corner intruder. (d) By this it appears how tender and nice a good conscience should be to do it, and what a horrible guilt of transgreising the very ordinance of God, there lyes upon the consciences of most that forsake the assemblies, out of dislike of their own Pastours, and go to others : which particulers being so clearly laid down I come to shew how groundless these mens usual complaints of their own Pastors are. And that in these following Objections.

Objec. 1. Concerning his life. It is lewd or Scandalous, so as they cannot look for benefit by his ministry.

Objec. 2. His opinion it is dangerous, so as they fear to be perverted by him.

Objec.

*d vide in
Hildersham
on John 4.*

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Object. 3. His gifts they are mean, so
as they cannot hope for much good by
him.

Object. 4. His carriage it is indis-
creet or intollerable, and not to be
indured.

It is indeed the weightiest prejudice
many have against their Pastors, so as to
forsake the assembly for his sake, when
they can justly pretend his life is lewd or
scandalous, and would you have us then
bound up to his ministry whose example is
enough to undo us? must we needs hear
him who hears not himself? must he guide
us to heaven, who walks himself in the
in the paths of hell? how can we credit
his words who shews his own unbe-
lief by his wicked life? who confutes his
sermons, by his practices? who pulls down
with his life, what he builds up with his
lips? will the Spirit lodge in his lips, in
whose heart he hath no room? will
the holy God make use of a prophanie in-
strument? who can gather grapes of
Thorns or figs of Thistles? how can we
be bound to hear him, whose life is so
lewd, or if we hear him what benefit can
we hope for from him?

Ans. I confess it is the most grievous
complaint

complain this, that can be if it be just
A wicked minister being of all men
most odious and abominable. If the salt
hath lost its savor it is good for nothing but
the dunghill, if the light of the world be
darkness how great is that darkness. The
Vrim and Thummim, Purity of Doctrine and
exemplarity of life are the two great re-
quisites in a Faithful minister of Christ,
far be it from me to patronize or plead for
any in whom there is a notorious defect of
these, any such enemy of Christ, or *Judas*
like traitor to Christ, as every scandalous
minister is. But yet may I oppose to this
prejudice these necessary considera-
tions.

1. From such the purest Church
upon earth cannot be free. And
that,

1. By reason of that innate corruption
that is in ministers as well as in other men.
Alas, they are but flesh, tempered of the
same clay with others, polluted with the
same original corruptions, prone to the
same vices, being Angels by office yet men
by nature? to whom though God hath
committed the heavenly treasure, yet are
these but earthly vessels still, as frail and
weak as othermen. And,

2. Pe-

2. Being as prone to sin as others, their temptations are far more then other mens. For Satan the common adversary of all souls knows his greatest advantage is in devouring those that should save mens souls. As the Syrians was commanded to fight especially against the King of *Israel*: So do the devils chiefly combate with the Priests and Prophets of *Israel*. The pulling down of these pillars is to weaken or raise the whole building, the misleading of these guides is the way to make all to err. The smiting of the Shepheard is to scatter the flock; to lull a sleep these watchmen is the way to surprise the whole army. Its Satans compendious way of destruction to prevent those that should convert others, to deform those that should reform others, so that they being as weak as others, and Satan grudging no pains continually to assault them, is it any wonder if they be after foiled? from such therefore the purest Church on earth cannot be free.

2. When thy own Pastor is such, yet hast thou reason to hear him, and no reason to forsake the publick assemblies for his lewdness sake. The heathen *Seneca* could advise men non quia loqueritur, sed quid, not so

so much to weigh who speaks as the matter
spoken, and the Scripture warneth them nor
 e Jude 16. to have mens persons in admiration, (e) nor
 f James 2. to have the Faith of God with respect of p-r-
 sone. (f) Though an Angel from Heaven
 g Gal. 1. should bring an untruth, declare another
 h Gospel, we ought to give no ear to him,
 i let him be accursed (g) and though a devil
 from Hell should utter a truth, it is not to
 be rejected for his sake that speaks it. Truth
 is Gods where ever it grows. As a
 mine of God or silver is the Princes in
 whose ground soever it be found. It must
 be received for the love thereof, as truth,
 and for his sake who is the God of Truth,
 by whom soever it be spoken. Moses learnt
 of the Heathen, Jethro his Father in
 Law, a plat-form, for the ordering the ma-
 gistracy of Israel, (h) Pharoah learnt of
 i Gen. 41. his prisoner Joseph how to prevent a fa-
 mine in Egypt. (i) Naaman was instruc-
 tive. led by his captive Damosel, where he might
 k 2 Kings 5. get his Leprously healed. (k) Old Eli was
 l 1 Sam. 1. taught by the Child Samuel: (l) Balaam by
 his very Ass. It is true the liquor often
 tastes of the Cask, and the preachers per-
 sonal looseness, may much weaken his
 strongest persuasions. Yet,
 m 3. Consider by our Saviours parable,
 it

it appears the ineffectualness of Gods word most what proceeds from the hearers own corruptions his unpreparedness, negligence, or obstinate wickedness, the fault is not so much in the seed or sower, as in the soil, the ground, that is either rocky, or thorny, or high way side; if it be Gods word it is good seed ever, and the Minister is but an Instrument, God is the principal Agent to make it fruitful. Paul plants and Apollo waters but God by his Spirit gives the increase. Now

4. Gods Spirit which breatheth where it listeth, accompanies sometimes not his holiest ministers with his saving operations, and sometimes he worketh by the lewdest of them. Thence our Saviours admonition (a) the Scribes and Pharisees ^{aMat,23.3} (those wicked hypocrites) they sit in Moses chair, all therefore what ever they bid you observe, that observe and do, but do not after their works, for they say and do not. If there had been no good to be reaped by them because of their personal wickedness, Christ would never have enjoyned them to hear them. Had Saint Paul supposed that the Spirit of love would by no means concur with those envious ones that preached Christ, to increase his bonds,

^aPhil. 1.15. he would not have rejoiced that they
^b1 Cor. 9. 26. preached him. (b) Nay, he supposeth, that
 it were possible, for a very cast away to be
 an instrument of others salvation, when
 he said *I keep under my body, lest when I
 have preached unto others, I my self should
 be a cast away,* (c)

^c1 Cor. 9. 27. 5. Consider, gifts may be where grace
 is not, edifying gifts for others benefits in
 him, who hath no sanctifying grace for his
 own. Judas had gifts fit for the Aposto-
 lical function; those that came to Christ
 could say, *Lord we have prophesied in thy
 name, and in thy name have cast out devils.*
 the Scribes and Pharisees were learned men.
 As a lame man may with his crutch point
 out the right way to others, which he is
 not able to walk himself, and a crooked
 Taylor may make a suit fit for a strait bod-
 dy, which cannot fit himself. And as
 wicked Balaam could make a clear prophe-
 cy of Christ (d), so may many edifie o-
 thers, that are themselves unsanctified:
 many have gone loaden with gifts to
 hell, God may use his talents to convert
 others, that is himself a stranger to the
 works of grace and conversion; if man
 have a competency of edifying gifts, ap-
 proved by the Church, and so be lawfu-
^dNum. 24. 17. ly

ly called to the ministry, it concerns not us, that he want an effectual calling as a Christian : we are to look to his call as a minister, not to his call as a Christian : for should the people stand upon their Pastors inward calling to grace, they could never hear any in Faith ; for how could they be ever certain of his effectual inward call, which is known to God alone ; the fairest shew may be but Hypocrify, but the Lord alone knows them that are his (e) ; if then thy minister be lawfull y called, sent, <sup>e2 Tim. 2.
19.</sup> and ordained, thou must receive him, receive a Prophet in the name of a Prophet, yea, thou may warrantably hope for a blessing from him though a wicked man. Why,

6. Because Gods ordinance, and his promised blessing upon it, depends not on mans, the instruments, holyness or wickedness. The promise is suspended upon no such condition, and will you bind God, where he hath not bound himself. May not waters make a Garden fruitful light-
ing upon a fit soile though conveyed by a Pipe of lead or wood, which gets no good it self by all the waters it conveys ; may not good seed cast into a good soil yield a good increase, though sown by unwashen hands ? had Elias refused meat from the

Ravens mouth, might not he have justly
Starved & will a noble man refuse his pardon,
because a mean peasant brings it from
the King ? the Papists may as well suspend
the benefits of the Sacrament on the worthy-
ness or intention of the minister, as we
suspend the benefit of the word on the same,
yet this we hold ridiculous and impious
in the one, and why not in the other ? if
then the purest Church cannot be wholly
free from wicked Ministers, and if thy
Pastor be such, yet hast thou reason to
hear him : and not refuse truth from his
mouth ; and the fault of the words in-
effectualness is most what in the soil, and
the spirit being a free agent often accom-
panies the lewdist Ministers, and edifying
gifts may be where sanctifying grace is
not ; and the ordinance is not suspended
on the worth of the instrument, but only
on the power and goodness of God
whose it is, then is this prejudice no suf-
ficient ground for men to forsake the pub-
lick assemblies for the Pastors sake, though
he be loose, or wicked in his life. In
this case indeed it becomes Christians to
to be modest, and not to be apt to speak
evil of him, as the manner is ; should our
tryal be at the peoples tribunal, I doubt

very

very few Ministers would escape condemnation, but some or other fault would be found, as who is free? and that so aggravated, our moats made beams, our mole hills mountains, that every one of us would find a censure severe enough, for either Lewd, or debaucht, or covetous, or contentious or Idle, there is not a Pastor in all Gods Church, but he would have somewhat found a miss in him, and he must with the Apostle expect to pass through evil as well as good report, through hard censures, and bitter revilings in this divided and corrupted age; but you brethren, I hope you lotherwise learn Christ, do not like cursed *Cham*; uncover your fathers nakedness, do not make your Pastors fault your cup talke, or his infirmities your pastime to tip them up or blazen them, rather pity them, as being inclined to the same corruptions with others, and exposed to a thousand more temptations, and pray for him: and by no means shut your ears against Gods word in his mouth. Look upon him as an instrument only by whom the Spirit may work. *si bene vixerit proprium lucrum, si bene dixerit tuum tolle quod tuum,* saith St. Austin. If he live well it is Gods work and

his gain, if he speak well it is thy advantage, take what is thine and be thankful. As for his wicked actions, those happen through the devils malice and his frailty, curse the devil, but pity the sinner and pray for him, who is like to answer for it to his Judge, to stand or fall to his Master, but for his holy doctrine that is thy portion; refuse not to hear it, consider it, meditate of it, and practice it: So shall God bless it to thee, though it come from the lowest Minister whatsoever: Else rejecting of it, thou must answer for it and be judged by it at the last day. That for the first motive, for this forsaking the assemblies, which, you see, is groundless, the prejudice men have to their Pastor concerning his life.

Obj. 2. Concerning his opinion. For so will some say would you have us bound to hear him who is popishly affected, or the next door, strict in the Law, too canonical, nay, we fear superstitious, and so may mix the childrens bread with poison and mislead us out of the right way; is it not dangerous to hear him.

Answ. To this I oppose these considerations, was not *Elias*, *Jeremy*, *John Baptist*, *Saint Paul*, and our blessed Saviour (who

(who spake as never man spake) accounted pestilent fellows, ring leaders of Sects, troublers of State, Deceivers of the people? how should these instances warn you of slandering your Pastor causelessly, or concluding him erronious upon the malicious hear *sayes* or surmises of those that are not able to judge of the doctrine, whether it be of God or no. Yet suppose he be erronious then must you consider of what Nature his error is, for though all truths be pretious, yet are truths of different natures, some essential fundamental points, *de Fide*, of the faith once deliveted to the Saints; some circumstantial, ceremonial, indifferent; some are perspicuously revealed in the Scriptures, wherein errors are damnable, some are more darkly revealed, of which wise and holy men in all ages have doubted; now if it be onely in circumstantial and less necessary truths, wherein you dislike your Pastors opinions, then must not this difference of opinion, beget in you any heart burning, or alienation of affection, though you do *dissentire*, think diversly, yet ought you not *discordare*, disagree, they that unwillingly differ in judgment, ought yet to be one in heart. The Spirit of God is promised to lead all his

chosen into all necessary truths, but not to all less essential discontents have in all ages been between great Clerks and holy Saints; contentions have even through Satans craft been cherished in the Church, they are apt to disagree on earth that shall meet in the same heaven. What remaines then but that love be still kept on foot, and we all endeavour to avoid bitterness of contention about these things? to follow the truth in love. As in building *Solomons Temple* there was no noise heard

*2 Kings 6. of Ax or hammer (f); So in the spiritual building of the Church we should not let any sound of contention be heard among us, such is the duty of both Pastor and people; especially it is the peoples duty to be so aware of Satans stratagems, which is to divide them from their Pastor, if it be possible, as not to entertain any needless jealousies or evil surmisings, judge cautiously of your minister, if possible, Search the Scriptures as the *Bereans* did to see if what he delivers be agreeable to Gods word, and if you find of a truth, that he and you differ in opinion in things less necessary and material, your care must be to pare the Apple and leave the worm, and that which is eaten by it, take the good and leave*

leave the bad, which directions being sound and wholesome, if they be observed, it will naturally follow that this is no sufficient ground neither, for any to leave our Church assemblies, for any prejudice men have against their Pastors opinion.

Obj. 3: The third prejudice is against their gifts, alafs will some say our Minister though he be good and orthodox, yet is he a very mean preacher: he is no Body for gifts, where such or such come in comparisons. His knowledge shallow, how can he enlighten us? he is no Orator, how can he work on our affections? or perswade us? what good can we expect from his dry, sapless, weak Sermons? or why should we be bound to hear him, when we may have better, by whom we may profit more, to this I oppose these considerations.

Ans^w. I. There may be in Ministers great difference of gifts, without any inequality at all, for which the one should be preferred before the other. For he who is inferior to him thou admires, in one kind, may excell in another, perhaps in a kind more useful and benefical. The gifts of God to his Church are dispenced in a marvellous great variety, so that there are

6 Cor. 12. are scarce any two ministers but they differ
 14. in their gifts (g). There are diversity of
 gifts but the same Spirit. In the Body na-
 tural the eye seeth better, but the tongue
 uttereth better, if the whole body were
 eye what would it do for a tongue, Saint
 h Cor. 11. Paul had more learning and knowledge (h),
 being at Lystra stiled for his utterance Mer-
 ies 14. cury or chief speaker (i); yet was not of
 11. that excellent presence as other Apostles
 were, Barnabas in comforting the afflic-
 ed excelled him, being therefore stiled
 k 436. the son of Consolation (k). John Baptist
 was excellent in terrifying secure sinners,
 1 Luk. 12. (l) he came in the spirit and power of Elias,
 17. but our Saviour was milder, not breaking
 the bruised reed nor quenching the smoking
 m Mat. 12. flax (m). In liklyhood Peter did in some gifts
 20. excell the rest, to whom Christ gave in spe-
 cial charge to feed his Lambs (n). Yet in
 s Joh. 21. powerful reproving of sin and denouncing
 15. Gods judgments, James and John excel-
 led him, being therefore styled Boanerges,
 Sons of thunder, so in the great diversity
 of his gifts, that is amongst ministers, yet
 each of them excelleth in their kind,
 one may have deeper matter, another
 a more eloquent mouth; one may
 be sweeter in comfort, another more
 power

powerful in reproof; one may be grace-
ful in pulpit, another in private con-
ference; one may be excellent in inter-
preting to increase knowledge, another in
application to breed good affections in
men (o). To one is given a word of wis-
dom by the Spirit, to another the utter-^{1 Cor. 12. 8.}
ance of knowledge by the same Spirit, one
may excel in this gift, another in that, none
in all. Now,

2. Consider this is the Lords doing,
for the beauty and benefit of his Church;
their different education, dilligence, or in-
dustry, is not all the cause of this diversi-
ty of gifts though it be one, Gods gift be-
ing now to be acquired in the use of these
means, whence St. Pauls injunction to Ti-
mothy (p) give attendance to reading, &c. ^{2 Tim 4.}
But it comes chiefly from Gods free dis-
position, who distributed to every man sever-
ally, as he will (q). And this

3. Makes much for Gods glory, and ^{11.}
the benefit and beauty of his Church.
For Gods glory, for the greatness of his
wisdom and freedome of his grace shineth
in this difference perspicuously, and for the
Churches beauty and benefit: for flowers of
divers bigness for colour and smell, do
adorn a feild exceedingly with it's par-
^{q 1 Cor. 12. 11.}

ty coloured coat, difference of voice, base, treble, tenor, and counter tenor, and difference of strings in an Instrument tuned by a skilful Musician, make the musick more melodious. So is difference of gifts an ornament to Gods Church. Yea, it is suitable to the peoples disposition. For as in the use of ordinary food, all have not the same appetite, nor like the same meat; hence God hath provided variety of creatures to fit every one, such is his Infinite goodness to us; so in the Church, one people may profit most by one mans gifts, another by anothers. God hath different works, and therefore provides different workmen; nay, the same person may profit best in knowledge by one Minister, in memory by another, and in affection by another. In some audiences great and eloquent scholars are fittest, in others such as can speak to the capacity of babes and ideots. Johns gifts was meetest for some mens disposition, he was an austere man, and came neither eating nor drinking; our Saviours fittest for others (q). He suited himself to publicans and sinners. Nay, as this diversity may suit to different dispositions, So doth it serve to increase love and unity amongst the servants of God, as letting you see they

Mat. xi. 17.
19.

they have need one of another, and so causeth them mutually to esteem each other.

The eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of thee, nor the head to the feet I have no need of you. Thus doth it tend both to Gods glory, and exceedingly to the Churches beauty and benefit.

4. Consider his ministry, whom thou accountest meanest of, is Gods ordinance, as well as others to whom in gifts he is inferior (r). *The Lord gave to one of his servants five talents, and to another but two, and to another but one, and he that had but two talents and gained other two with them, had the commendation of a good and faithful servant, as well as he that received five and gained five.* There was a great difference between Paul and Timothy, the one aged the other a youth, the one profound, famous for labours, and success in the Gospel, the other not heard of yet, yet see what Paul saith of him (s). *If Timothy come see he may be with you without fear,* (take heed you wrong him not, disgrace him not, see that you love and reverence him) for he worketh the work of God, as I also do? let no man therefore despise him, Timothy was ordained a Minister and therefore they was not to despise but reverence him

^{s1} Cor. 12
^{21.}

^r Mat. 25. 15.

^{s2} Cor. 6.
10, 11.

him, as if Paul himself was with them; because he was Gods ordinance, and did the work of God as well as he. Suitable is that exhortation concerning other

^{1 Thes. 5.} Ministers. (t). *Have them in singular love for their works sake.* The feet of all that bring the glad tidings of peace must be beautiful in our eyes. And on the other hand the contempt done to the meanest of Gods servants, reacheth to God himself (u). *He that despiseth you despiseth me.*

^{13.} ^{16.} ^{10.} ^{16.} 5. Consider Gods word should be received not for his sake that brings it, but for his sake whose it is. Hence the Scribes and Pharisees sitting in Moses his chair, and teaching Moses his doctrine, were to be respected though they were wicked Hypocrites. Gold and Silver is not of more value, out of an imbrodered cup then a leathern purse, meat is as pleasing to the palate, as wholesome to the body, out of a clean earthen vessel, as out of a silver Platter, as a candle shines as bright in a wooden, as in a Golden candlestick: why should Gods word then, better worth than thousands of Gold and silver, be less valued, or the heavenly Manna be disrelished, or the light of our paths be obscured, by the meanness of the ministers that brings it? Gods

Gods word is the same, of the same intrinsick worth, who ever the minister be, and so should be esteemed and received by us, who ever thy Pastor be, if he be a true minister of Christ, and have sufficient gifts, to qualifie him for the ministry, then mayest thou doubtless, profit by him, if the fault be not in thy self(x). *The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, ana⁷ ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted(y).* The best Christian that is may profit by the meanest of Gods servants. Even Saint Paul professed that this was one cause why he so earnestly desired to come to the Romans, that he might receive some good, some increase of Faith even from them(z). And I am per-
swaded there is never a Minister that is of the most excellent gifts (if he have a godly heart) but he can truly say that he never heard any faithful Minister in all his life, even the meanest, but he could discern some gifts in him, wanting in himself, and received some profit by him, saith Mr. Hildersham.

6. The fruit and profit, that is to be received by the ministry, depends not only or chiefly on the gifts of the Preacher
but

but on the blessing of God upon his own ordinance; for Ministers are but Ministers by whom we believe, and God for his own Glory may give that blessing to the more unworthyest, he denies to the most excellent, that the glory may be intirely his own, and that his strength may the more appear in the Ministers weakness. He sometimes causeth that which the world counts foolishness, to confound the wise, and the weaker to exceed the stronger, in efficacy and profitableness. Saint Peter did convert more at one sermon than Christ himself, probably did in all his life, who is Paul who is Apollo? saith the Apostle, but Ministers in whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man. *I have planted and Apollo watered, but God gave the increase.* Such is the peoples duty then to depend upon God, for his blessing in his ordinance, rather than upon the gifts of the teacher. I may allude to that (b). In Eccl. 11.6. *the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thy hand, for thou knowest not whether shall prosper either this or that,* so do thou hear one of Gods servants as well as another, at one time as well as at another, for thou knowst not by whose ministry it is, nor what sermon it is, by which

*b. Cor. 3.
5, 6, 7, 8.*

which God will be pleased to work upon thy heart. Indeed on the other hand it is not possible thou shouldest profit by thy Pastors ministrations, if thou attend not, or attend with prejudice, or without reverence unto, or delight in it, not acknowledging Gods ordinance in it, or not seeking Gods blessing upon it. If then there may be a great difference in Ministers gifts without inequality, if he whom thou thinkest meanest may excel in his kind, if the difference be from the Lord, and that in order to his own glory, and the Churches beauty and benefit, and the meanest be Gods ordinance as well as the best, and the word be to be esteemed for its own worth, and his sake whose it is, who ever be the minister publishing it. If thou may profit by the meanest, if the fault be not thy own, and the profit depends not on his gifts, but Gods blessing. Then though thou may rightly covet the best gifts, and bles God for them when thou enjoyest them, yet mayest thou not despise the meanest of Gods Ministers nor despair of profit by him. Nor is this then a sufficient plea for forsaking the publick assemblies, the Pastors defects in gifts.

4. The last prejudice is from his carriage

riage supposed to be indiscreet perhaps intollerable. Its true will some say our Ministers life is good, his opinions Orthodox, and his gifts excellent, but he behaves himself strangely in his place. Either he is alwayes chiding, and reproofing us, A meet Branerges, a son of thunder, telling us oft of Hell and Damnation, as *Ahab* said of *Micaiah*, prophecyng concerning him ever evil, no good. This made *Felix* distaste St. *Paul*, when he preached of temperance before him and *Drusilla*, who was most unchast, and of judgment before him an unjust judge; or perhaps he is ridged in keeping us to Church orders: he will not bear with us in what he dislikes though it were his prudence to pass by. To this loppose several considerations. I confess there may be indiscretion in the best Pastors. Its a difficult thing both to please men in wisdom, and yet to save, and not betray their soules in faithfulness. Yet on the other hand it is ordinary for people to blame them that are faithful; for their faithfulness, under the notion of indiscretion. Remember Gods strict injunction to those watchmen of *Israel*, to cry aloud and not to spare, to warn men from the Lord in every evil

yil course , and that under pain of being guilty of the blood of their souls, that mis-
cary by their negligence. And if you con-
sider this, how can you wonder if they be
very tender of suffering any sin to lie upon
you they observe unteproved, unreformed,
if they fear Gods displeasure more then
mans, and take heed least that you call
discretion be not nicknamed so, being in
truth Laodicean Lukewarmness or want
of Zeal. Do but in the next place survey
the generality of people in these dayes,
how dull of hearing are some, how fro-
ward and untoward others, how nicely
Hipocristical and tickle others, and how
secure others , and it will seem almost
impossible for a faithful Pastor to work
on you to reformation, unless they speak
more then discretion and modesty would
almost permit.

Consider also if it be not better, the
people be not reproved and kept awake, and
at last saved through the Pastors reproofs
and corrections , however deemed indis-
creet, then muzzled in their sins. Is it
not better a wholesome though smarting
plaster be laid on, where need is, than
that corruption should fester ? doth not
more souls perish by the Ministers luke-

warmie coldness, then indiscretion? better are the faithful words of a friend, than the deceitful kisses of an enemy. It is blessed thunder if it do but awake men out of their sins, you are much more behold to your Pastor for his plain dealing, and honest hearted reproofs, in faithfulness to God, and your souls, than if he should flatter you in your sins with *placentia* speaking pleasant things. All which particulars duly considered, do shew how groundless mens forsaking the assemblies is also, because of the prejudice they too often cherish against his carriages and indiscretion. Truth is, what ever men pretend, the root of all is secret malice against the Church ministry, bread and nourished in their hearts, or at least want of love, malice cannot judge well of any thing, that comes from him a man loves not, perverts his meaning, construes wrong all his words and actions, suckes poyson from that from which a diligent Bee would draw the sweetest honey; in these dayes malice between Pastors and People flames out hot, or at least love is cold, and we know Christ had his Apostles look for this entertainment in the world: and so we need not think it strange, concerning this fiery tryal. He bad

had them expect to be reviled and persecuted, and have all manner of evil spoken of them, telling them the Prophets of old had been so used before them (a). And Saint Paul saith of himself and his fellows ^{a Mat. 5. 10.} ^{b 12.} that they found their Masters words true by experience, for they were reviled, persecuted, despised, accounted the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things (b) And when God opened to him ^{b Cor. 4. 12.} ^{c 13.} at Ephesus a large and effectual door. That is, blessed his ministry mightily, and gave it entrance into the hearts of men. Yet were there many adversaries raised up against him (c). Nay, it is made a kind ^{c 1 Cor. 6. 9.} of marke of an unfaithful Minister not to be thus used (d). *Wo to you when all men speak well of you, for so did your father of the false Prophets (e).* If I yet pleased men, ^{d Luke. 6. 26.} ^{e Gal. 1. 10.} I should not be the servant of Christ, the reason is, what ever men pretend, it is a Ministers fidelity, and plainness, and boldness in reproofing mens sins; that's the prime cause of their hatred and malice against them; when Jeremy complained every one did curse him, though he had neither lent nor borrowed upon usury, he hints the cause in the next words, that he was a man of strife and contention with

f Jer. 13. 10. the whole earth (*f*). Ahab hated Michaiah,
 because he prophesied not good concerning
g Kings 22. him, but evil (*g*). The two witnesses diu-
 8. vex and torment men by their ministry
b R. 11.
 10. (*h*). Indeed this evil made Moses, Jeremy and Jonah to find out so many excuses,
 as fearing to enter upon this so hateful,
 and thankless a calling, and it tempts ma-
 ny good Ministers either to give over the
 calling, if they can live without it, or at
 least to be unfaithful in performing it, as
 breeding them so much hatred, and dis-
 pleasure with men. *I said*, saith Jeremy,
Jer. 20. 9. *(1) I will not make mention of him, nor speak*
any more of his name: but his word was in my
heart as burning fire shut up in my bones,
and I was weary with forbearing, I could not
stay.

Now for a remedy of this disease, oh
 that people would consider, that near re-
 lation they stand in, and that dear affecti-
 on they owe to their Minister, they are their
 fathers spiritual fathers begetting them to
 Christ. Pastors, Shepheards, Watch-men,
 such as must give an account. That they
 would consider the strict command of God
 for love: hence under the Law the Priest was
 to carry in his garments the names of the
 twelve Tribes on his shoulders, to signify
 the

the weighty burden he undertook ; and in his breast plite, to shew his entire affection unto them, and this affection it is, that maketh Ministers faithful in their office to watch over their souls unwearyedly, to spend and to be spent, to win them to Christ. And so in spiritual regeneration, as in natural regeneration, it is love that begets Children unto Christ. And on the other hand the people should be as careful of love to their Ministers.

Saint Paul records of the Galatians (k) Gal. 4. 15.

That they would have pluckt out their very eyes to have given them unto him; far short of the Galatians are those that muzzle the mouths of the oxen that should tread out the corne. That abridge the hire of the labourer, and withhold the Churches right. The Galatians was willing to forsake the dearest things they hid in the world, their very eyes, if not their life for the Gospels sake, and its ministry (l). Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth in all good things. So I say consider what love is commanded by God from Ministers to their people, and people to their Ministers. But on the other hand see from whence all variance betw^g them comes, even from the Devils craft

craft, and malice, for no way hath he more effectual, to binder the efficacy of the word then this. His five thousand years experience hath taught him that it is to little purpose to mutter a syllable directly against Gods word, he sees no likelyhood to beget in Christians, especially in Protestants, adirect hatred of the word as such. His policy then directs him to work obliquely, to distil into mens hearts a hatred of their Ministers, so to make them set at naught the word they preach. This is the devils craft. Now consider lastly how unreasonable this is, what is the matter? Is there some petty quarrel betwixt you? wipe it of, are there some occasions of disaffections? look it be not causless, as for the most part they are. Do they reprove your sins, drunkenness or sacrilege, or perjury, or rebellions, or prophanations of Gods day or the like. Alas, they would not do it but in love to your souls, they would have your good will, and gladly be beloved of you if they durst forbear, to please you, but necessity lies upon them to cry a loud and not to spare to tell *Judah* of her sins, and *Israel* of her abominations, Should you not then rather loye then hate them for this? and say

say let the righteous smite me and it shall be a kindness, for faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful (m). All these considerations do bid you ^{mProv. 27.} shake off anger, envy and despight by all means, not to entertain the least seed thereof. No evil reports, no Idle accusations against your Pastor (n). But rather to ^{mTim. 5. 12.} pray for them to God, to deliver them from unreasonable men (o). And as St. Paul speakes of *Epaphroditus* to receive them in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such ^{pPhil. 2. 32.} in reputation (p). Laying aside all malice and guile and evil speaking, as new born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that you may grow thereby, and then I dare say you will find no cause of forsaking the publick assemblies of the Church for your Pastors sake which was the second grand motive we propounded to consider, why men are willful to forsake our Church assemblies as the manner of some is. Besides these two grand occasions of forsaking the assemblies, there be others we need not speak so largely of, because being but named, they cannot but be abhorred, and being seen they discover their own nakedness, such are these following.

I. Some

I. Some forsake the assemblies and separate themselves from us out of mere Ignorance, taking offence at many things in our assemblies causelessly, or without any weighty reason, they do not and are not able to distinguish between the essentials and circumstantial in Religion, and so look upon any supposed mistake in the latter, with detestation proper only to the perversion of the former, and thence violate charity, and break communion with those that hold the same faith with them. These eager Spirits having a zeal without knowledg, blow up minute differences, with lasting contentions. They raise disputes about a pin, or a nail of the Temple, that even endangers the whole fabrick, they let the same value upon the leaves and bark of the tree, as upon the fruit it self, they make ado about a nail, or tile of the house, as if it were of the same concernment with a pillar or a beam, they look upon that as simply evil, which is onely so in some respects, as it is wrong circumstantiated, or which is onely not perfect in all degrees, whereas did but men deliberately prize that which they oppose, and proportion their displeasure to the just weight thereof, their

their contentions would soon be calmed, and never become quarrells with the Church of God. Nay indeed in many it is meer lottish Ignorance, that is the cause of their forsaking the assemblies of the Church of God, they was never grounded in the first principles of the Oracles of God, and especially they would never learn their obligation to the Church they was baptiz'd in, to hold communion with it. Perhaps these men will say they would fain do right and go the right way but they would never hearken to their right guides, but gave their ears first to seducers, being a little too much affected with that shew of piety they saw in them, they put themselves wholly upon their directions and examples, and so are carried hoodwinckt or blindfold into Schisms and damnable errors. Thousands there be that have separated themselves that are meer Ignorants, silly women especially, *that was alwais learning but never came to the knowleig of the truth*, having better affections than principles, whom, because they would not receive the truth in the love thereof, God hath given up to strong delusions to believe lies; and so in some, that's one cause of their forsaking

ing the assemblies, meer Ignorance.

2. This Ignorance is oftentimes proud or conceited. So that's another cause, damnable pride. The wisest of men arraignes this vice as the ring-leader of divisions (q). Only by pride cometh contention. Indeed there are few sins unto which pride is not either a parent or nurse, but above all Schism and Heresie hath its immediate dissent from it, having so many lineaments and features of this deformed mother, as sufficiently attests its ex-
See some of
these heads
very largely
and learned-
ly discoursed
of by the au-
thor of the
whole duty-
of Man in
the causes of
the Decayes
of Christi-
anity, to
whom I here
acknowledg
my self
much in-
debted.

traction. It is pride that makes some men dislike whatsoever is not of their own invention, or whatever is imposed by their superiours, or whatever others have a hand in whom they contemn or hate, be it never so good or true, or what is contrary to that they have formerly maintained: and they are lyth to deny themselves, as in effect to acknowledge they was form-
 erly in an error, and in the wrong, its pride that make some desire, to go in some singular way, and loath to go on in a beaten tract, wherein they may be ob-
 scured in the throng? with Theudas they are ambitious to be some body, with Simon Magus to be mynes rīs. Some knowing or Zealous person, they would be taken no-
 tice

tice of by their neighbours as a stricter sort of livers, and would be eminent though by the infamy of Schism or separation. To be called of men *Rabbi Rabbi*, is in chaunting musick to any Pharisee and the very essence and constitutive parts of a Schismatick is the esteem of himself and the contempt of others. I am not as this Publican, was the Pharisee's voice, whose very name signifies separation, and our modern Separatists do but echo the same note, when they pronounce these Church assemblies, and the members thereof heretical or carnal, from whom they withdraw themselves, they say as those in *Esa 53 v. 6, 7.*
Stand off, come not near me, for I am holier than thou. But let it be remembred that while the Pharisee lookt so fastidiously on the poor Publican, he renounc'd communion in prayers much more acceptable to God then his own, and the observation is truly applicable in our case. The Transcendant purity and Sainthood and holiness, which our Separatists boast of? being if brought to the touch but a more sublimated wickedness. And their pretence for spirituality, being only verified in spiritual pride. By their fruits of rebellion, disobedience to, and contemn-

tempt of Magistracy and Ministry, rash censures, malice, evil speakings, and bitterness, headiness, treasons, high mindedness and the like fruits, you may know them. So this pride is another partition wall that Satan useth to divide us from God and one another, and to make men forsake the Assemblies of the Church.

3. It is the manner of some also to forsake them out of curiosity; this is that baneful weed, which the devil made shift to steal even into Paradise, which hath ever since affected the richest soils, the most pregnant understandings. I do not altogether mean that speculative curiosity about the mysterious parts of our religion, though that be a notorious mean also to propagate Heresies, when men will not be soberly wise, but will attempt to find out the depths of those mysteries which God hath thought fit to make secret; prying into the Ark of the secret counsells of God. But that curiosity of men which is usually about those little trifling notions, and thin aerial speculations, which do not at all tend to make men wiser to salvation. Men are not content to know those divine truths which

tend

tend to Godly practice, therefore they think such preachers as insist of them, dry and insipid, and forsake them to follow those, who will offer them nicer speculations, be they never so unprofitable to the great end of Salvation ('). vide The Decays of Christianity in the causes of dis- putes.

Besides there is another curiosity that is deep in the guilt of drawing men from the Assemblies, to which they belong. A curiosity to hear strange preachers, they have itching ears & their ordinary food do not please them, a new before it weeps clean, an uncouth bite is for their palates, a Minister of the best gifts cannot please them long, as the Athenians were all for enquiring of news, so are these men all for novelties. In a short time, they distaste the ministry of their ordinary Pastors and so to please the distempered palates of their fickle souls, they must needs be gadding abroad, to hear every upstart Mountebank that is near them, and so this is one great reason of their forsaking their ordinary assemblies, as the manner of many is.

4. Another reason hereof is covetousness and interest, the great Idol to which the world bowes, as the Apostle saith,

they that will be rich fall into divers temp- tations

tations; so do they fall into this sin among the rest. Some men will be rich, therefore out of respect to their profit, they absent themselves from the Assemblies of the Church, they must needs spend some Sabbaths in going to Fairs; or going journeys, or makeing bargains, or meeting customers, or looking to some house business, they cannot get their living, they say, by coming to Church, and when they come they must needs leave a great part of their family behind them, for some worldly advantage or other. These are like those

*Mal. 3:14. in Malachi (1) That said it is in vain to serve the Lord, and what profit is it that we have kepr his ordinances? And others there be in the world, that make a shew of religion and piety : that have no other end in their broaching and maintaining Schisms and separations from the assemblies of the Church, then their proper advantages. They make divinity an handmaid, religion a stalking horse to a policy. *Fetobaam* made the Golden Calves become more venerable Deities, when he found them fit to serve his jealousies, and *Matchiavels* policy, that states and persons should secure themselves of religion was a common practice, long before it was a rule

rule. In the Old Testament we read of mercenary Prophets that turned the office into a trade, that divined for money, and even for handfuls of Barley, and pieces of Bread. And in the New St. Paul speaks of deceivers that speak things they ought not for filthy lucre sake (v). Titus. 1. And the same Apostle declaiming against it, the love of money as the root of all evil, he reproves it from its having made men err from the faith (x). And it is St. 2 Tim. 6 Peters prediction, that the most damnable heresies, even the denying of the Lord that bought them, should be introduced by those, who through covetousness should make Merchandise of their Proselytes (y). 2 Pet. 2. And is it not plain how mens telling ears in this Age, do invite many Mountebanks in Religion, to try experiments upon them, when men nauseate Old truths; and Old teachers because they are acquainted with them, and embrace Doctrines and broachers of them because they are new; when men love such teachers and are bountiful to none but such as they love; how can it be doubted but some will suit themselves to their disciples humours to gain money to themselves, when by sowing tares, they can immediately, K reap

reap Gold? our age hath given us sufficient experience hereof, would God that this way of divelish traffique were at an end! And doubtless as there be many leaders, so are there many Disciples in the separation, in whom covetousness, and self interest reigns exceedingly, and by it they are animated in their obstinate continuance in their erronious waies, so as to stop their ears to the charmes of sound doctrines, charme they never so wisely.

Now O that such would consider, what the character of infamy is, that remaines yet upon Achan, that he troubled Israel to enrich himselfe. And on Balaam, that he not only loved the wayes of covetousness, but ensnared the people in uncleanness, and upon those in the Gospel, that made Gods house a house of Merchandize, and so a den of thieves. So that another ground and reason of mens forsaking, and propagating separations from our publick assemblies. Covetousness, selfe interest. Ile name a

Even Idleness, and this both spiritual and natural, spiritual for because many men will take no paines in the practise of the duties of godliness which might well employ mens whole lives; therefore they fall into nice and new opinions to im-

employ their active mindes. So spiritual Idleness in things in which they should be employed makes men curious, and curiosity contentious. The zeal of practise of humility, and patience, and self denial, and mortifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, and renouncing the world and the other parts of real goodness, this zeal grows cold, and so that of disputes gets and gathers heat and vigor. Alas our good works in this age fall short of the first Christians, and then no wonder that our controversies exceeds theirs; because we spend not our time in the one, which is irksome to flesh and blood, and therefore we employ it in hammering and forging the other. Pharaoh understood this well, though he applied it ill, when he thought the Israelites proposals of travelling into the wilderness to their devotions, was the effect of their idleness, and so increast their taskes as the properest way to divert their design; and as spiritual Idleness, so also natural, is often the cause of division. For as experience sheweth such men as detest or neglect their secular callings, are most apt to run after new teachers; and with the widowes that neglected their office of Ministration, to be busibodies and in many families the

She-zealots, neglecting their proper business, the guiding of the house, have therefore run into conventicles, and upon them have seducers acted their designs most, leading captive silly women to become duck coyes to whole families, besides these there are another sort of Idle persons to, that can sit at home, lurke by their fire sides when they should be in Gods house: and though they have little or nothing to hinder them, from attending his ordinance, yet any preceue, a showr of rain, a sore finger, an Aking head, a thin blast of weather will serve the turn to divert them. O that such would remember Hezekiahs example; who within three dayes after he had been sick of a most painful and mortal disease went into

^aEsa. 38.22. the Temple (a). And the woman that

^bLuk. 13.
10, 1. on the sabbath reported to the Synagogue, though she had a spirit of infirmity eighteen yeares (b). Alas the cause is, mens hearts are dead, and void of grace, and the love of God and his word, and so they find little comfort, they take no delight in his publick worship, and therefore are glad of an excuse.

David loved Gods tabernacle well. For his heart and

^cPsa. 84.12 his flesh rejoiced for the living God (c). Those that tast how swcer the Lord is,

will

will desire the sincere milk of this word
(d). O thou that art so careless whether
ever thou appear in the assemblies of Gods
Church in this life, thou hast cause to fear
thou shall never stand in the congregation
of the righteous in the life to come (e).
Thats a fifth cause of mens forsaking or
absenting from the assemblies as the man-
ner of many, is,

6. There is a sixth which I will name
because I will miss none, and but name it,
because I have spoken in effect to it before.
The manner of some is to forsake them, up-
on pretence, they can spend their time
and serve God as well, pray and read
good books at home as in the Church
of God. But God loves the gates of Si-
on more then all the dwellings of Jacob
(f). David sure being both a prophet and a King could serve God as well in private
as any pretenders, and he had both a prophet and a Priest with him in his ban-
ishment yet did he for all that long
for the publick worship of God, bewailed
the want of it exceedingly (g).

But I have fully shown you before the 3.
excellency and acceptableness of publick
worship performed by Godly ministers to-
gether with his people in a publick place,

R 3 above

above any private whatsoever, that's a sufficient consideration to convince them of sin, that forsake the assemblies upon this account, as the manner of some is.

Thus have I now both discovered the evident duty of all Christians, and their obligation to frequent the publick assemblies in order to the publick worship of God, and the sin of those men, that either upon pretence of corruptions in the Church, though they acknowledge it Orthodox, and right in the substantialls of religion, or of some faults in the ministers life, or opinion, or gifts, or carriage, but in truth out of malice or hatred against him, or out of pride, or curiosity, or Idleness or upon pretence they can as well serve God at home, do neglect or forsake the publique assemblies. Now what remaines but a word of exhortation, to all that have an ear to hear what Gods Spirit saith unto the Church's, and members of them.

I. I beseech you Beloved in the Lord, to learn to lay to heart your obligation to attend upon Church Assemblies: and beware of those that endeavour the divisions of the Church, or to divide and separate you from it. It's the Apost'les own earnest

ex-

exhortation, (g) now I beseech you brethren Rom. 16
mark them which cause divisions and offences,^{17.}
contrary to the Doctrine which you have learned,
and avoid them. They are no lovers of
your souls as they pretend, they are no ser-
vants of God for your good, they are no fit
guides for salvation, that for things meekly
external, adiaphorous, & indifferent, matters
of meet order or decency, separate them-
selves from the society of a true Church,
and would have you so to do. As if a furio-
us brainsick sailor should upon every occa-
sion of anger or discontent, cast himself o-
verboard, presuming to be safe enough out
of the ship; the ordinary road way of Gods
saving any soul is in the unity of the Churc^h,
And that is in a coniunction of them to some
visible ordinary congregation according to
that, (h) the Lord added to the Churc^h such as
should be saved, but excommunicati, they who
go out from amongst us, because they was
never of us, as to their hearts, I will not pre-
sume to judge them as to their final state, yet
this I'll say, that the Churc^h being the
Spouse of Christ, and Schism and Heresie
being a work of the Flesh, an effect of so bad
causes as I have shwon you fully, ranked by
the Apostle with fornication, and drunken-
ness, and adultery, and the like. I would

not dye in their state for all the world; take heed hereof, then I beseech you.

2. But for Church Assemblies, I beseech you labour to love them and delight in them and be more thankful to God, for the liberty you have to frequent and enjoy them, than hitherto you have been. Consider the cloud of witnesses that is gone before you.

i Tim. 2. 20. (i) Walk in the way of good men, and keep the way of the righteous. They have ever highly esteemed and diligently frequented the Assemblies of the Church. Christ's Parents being poor dwelt far off Jerusalem, yet did they go up every year to the passeover, which was the most solemn Church Assembly, that Gods people in those dayes had. Behold a witness against them that pretend poverty for their excuse. The Apostles after Christ's ascension were continually in the the Temple (k). And Anna the Prophetess, departed not from the Temple but served God, with prayers and fasting night and day (l). And the Primitive Christians continued dayly with one accord in Temple *Acts 2. 46.* (m). Yea, our blessed Saviours custome was to the Synagogue every Sabbath day (n). *Luk. 4. 16.* And did constantly go to every passeover at *Joh. 2. 13.* *Jerusalem* (o). behold what witnesses you have against those that pretend they have knowledge

knowledge and grace enough, they have no need to go to Church, they canno profit by it, but can as well serve God at home. *Hezekiah the King you see resolved so soon as ever he recovered to go up to the House of God (p).* David loved the habitation of Gods house, and the place were his ho ^pEzra. 38.
our dwelt (q). He counted Gods Tabernacles amiable, his soul longed, nay fainted for them (r). He made it his choice to be a ^qPsal. 26.8.
constant companion of them that feared God (f). He was glad when they said unto him let us go up to the House of God. Be- ^rPsal. 84.
hold what witnessies you have also against those, that being great and rich, take stanc upon them, and think it a kind of debasement to be constant in attending Gods houle and service. Let us in the fear of God follow these excellent examples, and of what ever degree we be, poor or rich, wise or learned, let us never forsake the Assemblies, or neglect them. If we do, we may easily provoke God to gives up to our own hearts lusts, or to hardness of Heart in sin, or to the delusion of Satan to believe his lies. And therefore let us prize the having opportunities of attending Gods houle. Let us count it one of the greatest blessings that our candlestick is not removed, nor is

is there a famine of the word in our daies,
nor is it persecuted, but that we may se-
curely and openly worship God in our
Churches, and Temples, and not, as our
miserable fore fathers, be glad to do it
in hills and holes, in Dens and Caves of
the earth. Let us labour to walke wor-
thy of this blessing while we enjoy it;
and to benefit by it, lest we provoke God
continually till he be weary of long suf-
fing : and so hear length destroy his Ta-
bernacle, as a garden, and lay wast our
congregations (¹). Let it be our daily
prayer for the continuance of our solemn
assemblies, both here and in all places
of our divided land (²). pray for the
peace of Jerusalem, They shall prosper that
love them. Thus let us do, every one,
ourselves.

3. Nay, let us, according to the latter
part of the verie, wherein our text is.
Let us exhort one another hereunto ; let
every one call upon his neighbors, and
friends, and draw them to frequent the
Church assemblies when the Lord had
prophesied, (³) that in the dayes of the
Gospel, all nations should flow unto the house
of the Lord, he addeth (⁴) that by this
means it should be done. Many people
shall

² Esa. 2. 2.

³ ver. 3.

shall go and say: come let us go up to the house of God. Especially let Masters of Families, and Parents be exhorted, not to think it sufficient to come to Gods house themselves, but see that their Children and servantes come also. A Godly Christian cannot be content, that they should attend him in his house, that will not acc^{tend} and go with him to Gods house (3). Exod. 20.
 you see the commandement runs thus: we do not onely keep the Sabbath our selves but must look that our Sons, and our Daughters, our men servantes, and our maidservants, and strangers do the same. Exod. 20.
 And Joshua^s piety runs thus. (a) I and Jof. 24. my house will serve the Lord. And David^s faith expressly (b), there shall no uncheerful person enter my house, no prophane content^{er}. Psal. 101.
 nor of religion. And (c) he speakes of this^d as one of the greatest comforts he had on earth, that he went with a multitude of them that kept holy day, and led them into the house of the Lord. This if we do not, if we walk not after these excellent patterns and ex^eamples, if we do not with cheerfulness go into the Lords Courts, and serve the Lord with gladness, and come before him with joyfulness; if we do not account our dayes and hours pretious that are so
 be-

bestowed, if we be not forward to take all holy opportunities, redeeming our time from the world, that we may spend them in these assemblies of Gods people, if we have neither delight nor appetite to the words and sacraments, or the duties of praise and invocation, if we be dull or lumpish, heavy and spiritless in them, if we be not much grieved to see or hear of the congregations being unfrequented or neglected; and glad to see, and quick to promote the frequency and fulness thereof. It is because we do not understand our own happiness in enjoying the benefit of them,

Joh.4.10. As Christ said to the woman of Samaria, we do not know the gift of God (*d*). We are so blind and insensible of the greatness of that privilege we may have in waiting upon the assemblies. And therefore we are so prone to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of many is. From which grievous sin God of his infinite mercy preserve us, making us evermore to delight in his house and presence. For Jesus Christ his sake to whom with the father, and the Holy Ghost be ascribed all honour and glory, might, majesty, and dominion, now, and for ever more. Amen.

F I N I S.

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